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in search of small towns





"Nothing will ever deter the comradeship, and nothing will alter the dim beauty of these communities."



My town

A young man's search.
With yearning
and much affection

by Rick Boulton

There is something about the personality of the small town that appeals to me. The itch to take off on another far-flung, loosely charted course across the country is on me again. And here's the point: too many people from Big Cities would never trust themselves to go out there and try a small town. I mean to *live* in one. When the urge comes, you seldom hear people say, "Let's pack up and move out to the country." A few maybe, but most say, "Let's move to another city." So they never get the feel for life the small-town person has.

I can remember Huntsville in 1971 when my friend Garth Thomas and all the men there, hands deep in pockets, used to go whistling down the street, and *fast*, too. That is the way grown-ups in small towns walk. Tell me, why do Big-City people believe that small-town people slouch or stroll? Is it because there is supposed to be so much visual inertia? Or is it because Big-City people don't know what it is to walk anymore?

Autumn nights in Huntsville, you'd always see someone striding home for supper, whistling too, glancing up at everybody on the sidewalk, carefree, having short conversations without stopping, and after supper you'd always see the same person rushing out the same way, heading for the corner store, or to a movie.

Once, my parents came to Huntsville to see me, also to check on how the job was going, how the situation was in the hotel where I stayed, with the hissing of the old radiator in the room, to eat a meal in the restaurant where I ate, and to generally check that I was looking after myself. Naturally, I wanted to show off the town to Mom and Pop, but the air that day was heavy and cold in Huntsville. It was Sunday, and there was nothing but big patches of emptiness and rows of still sentinels. Even my friend Charlie, the old man who sat in the lobby of the hotel listening to the sound of each day dying, was absent.

For awhile I felt badly about leaving Huntsville. Little did I know what was coming up, traveling to the Atlantic towns and then heading out west, waking up some blessed morning in Dauphin, Man., or Oromocto, N.B., and finding a corner for a whole summer where I would study my life and the faces of the people. I still remember the roaring silence and cold afternoons of Huntsville.

But other days came when I pushed across the country and met other men with hands deep in pockets, whistling and laughing their way along the street. You might wonder how it is with small-town Canada.

Here's a typical happening in a typical small town, and how I managed. Just before evening, I was walking alongside the sidewalk in the middle of Summerside, P.E.I., and who in his right mind would imagine me, a stranger, getting invited to the Miss Summerside Pageant at the high-school auditorium that evening by a young lady selling ice cream on Water Street? I did get invited too, all dressed up in my only sports coat with bright-red shirt, purple tie, and unpressed slacks. Ten contestants got up there on the stage, and a father turned to me and said, "That's my daughter with the red ribbon - she plays the piano." By the time the evening was over, I had a dozen new friends, including a wiry, older man who wanted to know what I was doing way out there.

"I have come to see Canada," I said.

Once, a couple of summers ago, I went out and picked blueberries in Amherst, N.S., a town where I met friendly people and had a room overlooking some beautiful trees and walk-

Freeman Patterson



"You might wonder how it is with small-town Canada."



Everyone, says the author, admits to an honest concern for the future of our small towns

Horst Ehricht



"I found a corner where I would study my life and the faces of the people."



"I have seen the surveys of the growth of the big cities, heard academics talk . . ."

Bill Brooks



"Why do Big-City people believe that small-town people slouch or stroll?"

ways. Amherst does not have the glamor of a tourist town, and is not on the ocean, but the place has always been full of swing, if you ask me. In this town lived four of the 33 Fathers of Confederation, more than any other community in Canada. Every town should be first at something. In 1869, the dikes gave way and the citizens awoke in five feet of water; everything movable had been escorted seaward by the receding tide.

When I was there, the town was counting itself proud to have such a lively, enterprising mayor as Norman Mansour, who could discourse on the virtues of the small town for days on end, who could speak with a rapid-fire delivery, and who could say such things as, "Now I direct your attention to the Confederation Memorial Building, which houses the finest council chambers in Canada." Once, Mansour came up and did 60 minutes on the open-line radio show, in which other town notables and I (I counted myself as a notable) took part. It seemed a long show, but everybody seemed to have a good time listening to Mansour talking. Time ran out and still he kept talking. The interviewer turned off the mike and he kept talking. An old-timer who was watching it all shook his head and said, "What a showman. what a showman!"

Having experienced Norman Mansour, I felt the need to improve myself. Perhaps if I were a smoker or drinker, I would have given up smoking or drinking. Instead, I picked out a little old Baptist church with a high ceiling and found a seat in the back (the church was packed). "How nice to see you again," said a lady in a red-feathered hat. The sermon, I remember, was delivered with vivid symbolism, full of ecclesiastical wallop. The scene, like the dialogue, was timeless, and the sermon could have been delivered in any small church in any small town.

Outside, it was a gorgeous, cloudless Sunday morning, and the sun bounced off the grass. The preacher positively beamed as he shook hands with the people. One family even hailed from Pennsylvania, and they searched through the crowd for people they knew. Everybody greeted each other, old friends, and talked about the weather and a Saturday-night Legion dance coming up. Younger people seemed conspicuously underrepresented, and

the only kids present were those in the company of grandfathers or parents. What does it say of a nation when only the elderly declare themselves for faith?

Growing up in Ontario, I had no appreciation of Nova Scotia, except that it was near the ocean, it was cold in winter, and it had a picturesque landscape. I was aware of only Halifax. Wake me up in the middle of the night now and whisper, "Nova Scotia", and I will reply, "Liverpool" or "Bridge-water".

In Liverpool, I regularly set the alarm clock for, listen to this, 5 a.m. I would groan out of bed, dress, and rush out to the Nova Scotia south shore where I walked for miles and circled on back to town to eat breakfast. Then I sauntered on down Gorham Street, listening to the quiet sound of the ocean, and chatting with someone sweeping the sidewalk. Strangers are welcomed with a smile in Liverpool. The streets are clean. There is no crime.

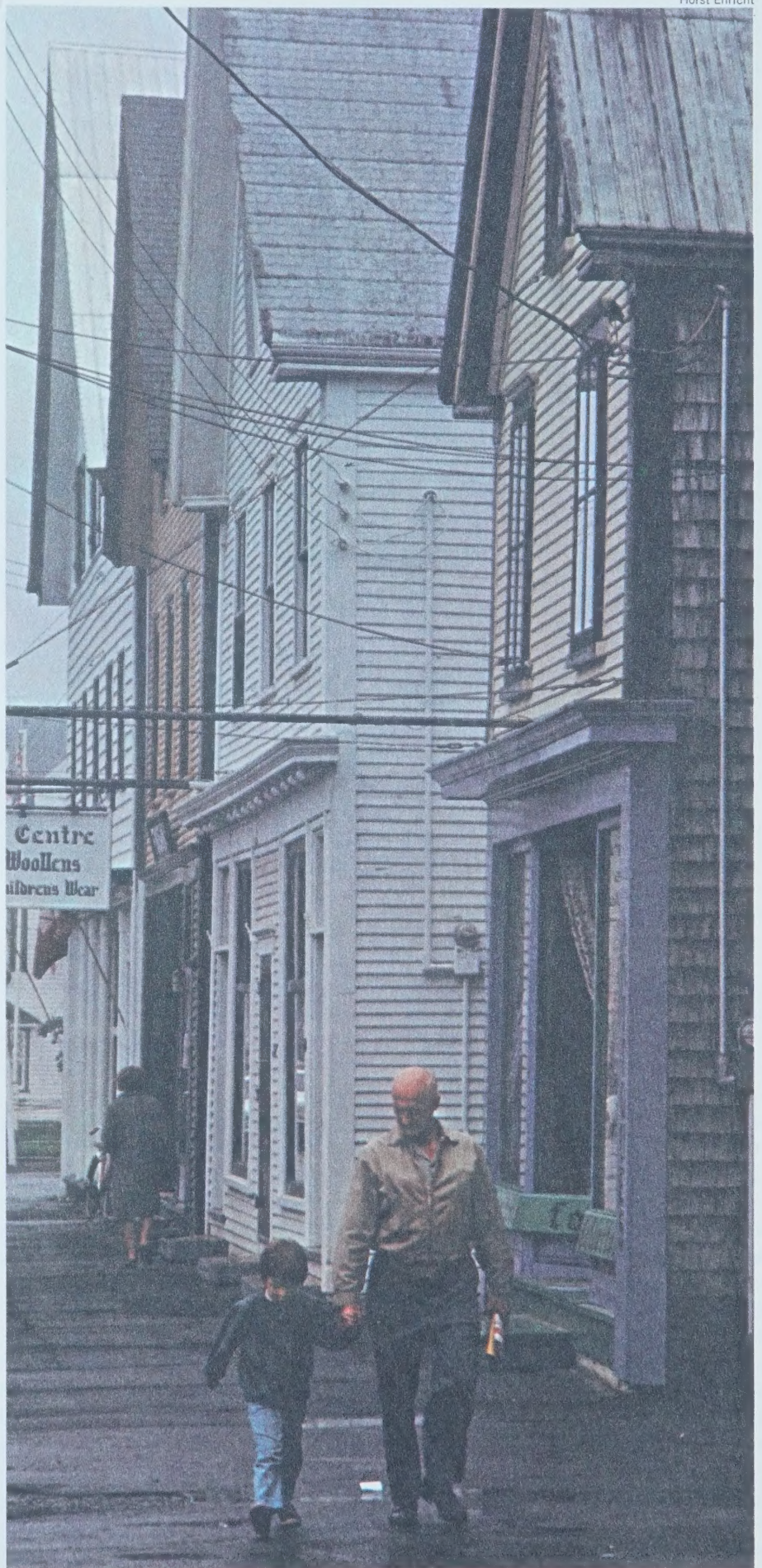
My friend's place had a marble fireplace, a little sink, and a huge bed, and when I looked out the vast window, I saw exactly what author Thomas Raddall saw: gold light falling on a dream town, gleaming white churches, beautiful flowers and trees, a robin fleeing a chimney as the sun goes down, the quietness of the streets at night, romance, tradition, history. Who dreams of such a place?

Everybody.

One morning, I passed an empty ball park. A Liverpool man with high boots swept home plate, then spread down lime for the base paths. He said he couldn't be sure of the principals, but there was indeed a big doubleheader today and I'd better arrive early because the place would be jumping. So I went out to the game, where wives, daughters, groups of men and boys all sat on green wooden benches to watch the sensational locals try on a tough team from the Big City of Halifax.

The Liverpool team was not as good as the team from the Big City that day, but in its failing demonstrated a strong willingness to survive like small towns everywhere without enough industry and jobs, but that hang in there just the same. Final score: five to zip for the Big City, but everyone at the game seemed happy enough; the players were only 14 and 15 years old anyway.

The game was over, everyone was at



Quiet streets, recalling traditions important to us all



The smell of prairie land; memories of rich earth, golden oceans of wheat

the dairy freeze and pizza place, where I got to talk to some young people. A boy in a blue windbreaker, younger brother played second base, said he was considering a job that would take him to the Big City to live. He liked the small town, but there wasn't the work. He was a nice, soft-spoken boy, and we wiled away the afternoon talking about small towns, with the aroma of root beer and pizza floating everywhere. Not far away, a local band played. Bugs danced in the fading light. Children stuffed themselves and played tag around some old cannons. Parents just watched. "I wish," said my young friend, "someone would tell me what to do."

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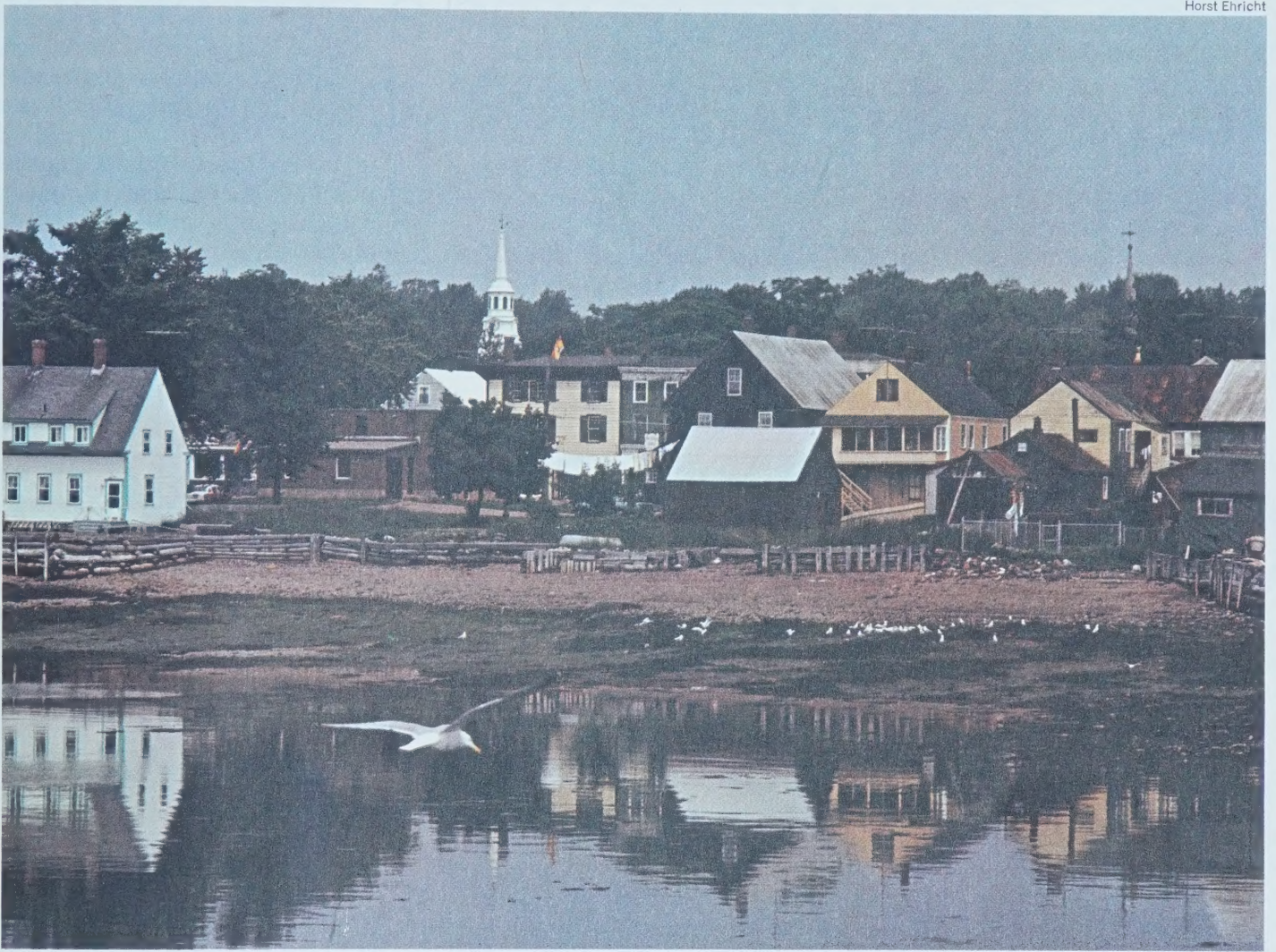
Everyone admits to an honest concern for the future of our small towns. I have seen the uneasiness in some of our communities, studied the declining population, chatted with people who

are poor and the young who do not stay, and realized the earth may not be so generous anymore in mining towns like Atikokan, Ont., and Kirkland Lake, Ont.

I have seen surveys of the growth of Big Cities, heard academics talk of the eternal clash between the town and city forces, and watched my old friend Charlie in Huntsville gaze at the stars and say, "Small-town people are going to run wild one of these days." I have been to the small Baptist town and heard: "Oh, He walks with me and He talks with me . . ." and visited the offices of Statistics Canada, where they say, "Oh, about 90 percent of us should be in the Big City by 1990." And I have walked down the January streets of Huntsville and heard the Prime Minister's words about how "the small town is the backbone of this country" coming out of every barbershop in town.

This said, all I know is that during

the last five years, I have begun to realize something: that nothing will ever change the fine simplicity of Canada's small towns, nothing will ever deter the comradeship, and nothing will ever alter the dim beauty of these communities, though in some it is not something that can be pointed to or held up. I have been to Dauphin, Man., where rich, black earth brings forth golden oceans of rapeseed, wheat, barley, and oats, and watched the whole town work with hammer and nails to help rebuild a lumberyard that burned to the ground shortly after it opened. I have been to the fall fairs in Pinawa, Man., and Bracebridge, Ont., and witnessed their dog shows and tasted their homemade pies. And the women are expressionless at first, in critical examination of their pies and each other. I have talked to newly-wed Marguerite Mitchell (in her mid-70s), who lives in the peaceful, little north-



Someday, says the young author, he will return to a small town forever

western-Ontario town of Atikokan and who received no fewer than 244 get-well cards from the townspeople when she was laid in hospital a while back.

And yet here I am, rooted to the Big City as if I were a tree, or an iron pole, missing a thousand things heard and seen and felt in the small town: the flutter of a window shade in Gravenhurst, Ont., birthplace of Dr. Norman Bethune; the houses of Summerside, P.E.I., with long, wide porches with rockers and boxes of flowers; the false-front stores and raised, wooden sidewalks of Armstrong, B.C.; the sound of balls being racked in the pool hall in Huntsville, Ont.; the smell of the prairie land in late fall, when the earth is opened in long, deep slashes; and the voices . . .

In a newspaper office: "Mrs. Cameron and her children passed through town the other day. On their way to North Bay. Understand they're doing right

well up there."

In a lounge, a local DJ reciting poetry and singing Irish songs: "The fire that lies in your eyes/Is the spark that endures and intensifies."

In the cold hockey arena of Dauphin, Man.: "This place isn't exactly Paris, France, you know, but we love it. C'mon you Kings, skate, skate, skate."

Under a fine, old, shady tree in Amherst, N.S.: "Ain't no work here, boy. Hasn't been for a while. Try the cities."

From a porch in Thompson, Man.: "I vow, boy, you come back here right this minute. Your father will hear about this when he gets home."

* * *

As I sit here and hear those sounds, I daydream that I've gotten my second wind and I'm ready for another go, with a new home in Huntsville, or maybe near Bridgewater, N.S., with soft light in a room, rain on the sill, and mist on the pane. Maybe there, I'll go

all the way as a writer, becoming the greatest writer ever to come out of Huntsville, Ont., and write a book about the small town so golden and so touched with magic that everybody in the Big City will shout, "Take to the hills, everybody, Huntsville is where it's at."

Perhaps, Old Man Charlie will still be alive and come running up those hotel stairs to find me and shake my hand. My friends, all the ones I've met, shook hands with, and said a sad goodbye to, will be singing in the fields, shouting "Bravo! Bravo! Let's hear it for our town." Even old Aunt Mathilde will throw her arms around me and weep, welcoming me back and forgetting darker years before.

And me? I'll just be sitting there in the golden glow of the lamp bought at Fred's Hardware saying, "Well, now I'm a writer at last, and I've done justice to my town." □

Once, a gas station was a gas station.
Not anymore. Change is the word

Change on the corner

by Jack Batten/photos by Ron Cole

At an intersection not far from my house in the city, where two main streets cross, there's a hint of a dilemma for our times. On one corner of the intersection stands a gas station of the old familiar sort — two sets of pumps, a couple of bays for car repairs, and a clutch of smiling attendants who call me by name and ask if I'd like the oil checked. On another corner of this intersection stands a second gas station, one that's not so old and familiar. The brassy sign over its entrance reads "Self Serve", and it has four sets of pumps, no bays, and no smiling attendants, though the only employee in sight, a woman who tends to the cash register and collects the money, seems friendly enough.

Half a block down the street from the intersection, there's yet a third gas-dispensing enterprise, this one run by Canadian Tire. Here, we're offered four sets of pumps, scurrying attendants dressed in bright-red coveralls, and a flock of coupons that entitle us gas buyers to credits for merchandise purchased in the adjoining Canadian Tire store.

The prices of gas at these three different establishments are almost as varied as the physical layouts. Here,

for example, is what I paid in December, 1974, for a gallon of regular gas at each spot.

Familiar friendly station : 68.9 cents.

Self-serve : 61.9 cents.

Mass merchandiser : 64.9 cents plus a coupon which actually reduced the gallon cost to 61.9 cents.

The three stations — along with the three prices — hint at this dilemma. "Hint" is the operative word, because the three by no means exhaust the variations in the business of retailing gasoline these days. The other pos-

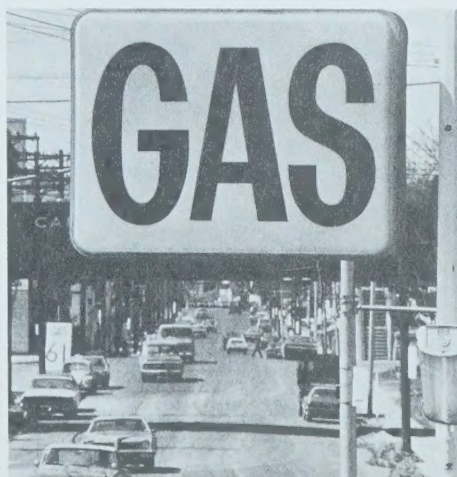
sibilities range all the way from such offers as Texaco's "Starburst of Bonuses" to the humble station on the back road that'll throw in a 25-cent car wash for every five gallons purchased.

There was a time when a car driver looking for a tank of gas pulled into the station of his choice and barked a quick, "Fill 'er up." No decisions called for. Today he's confronted with an almost-bewildering variety of judgments. Will it be cut-rate, self-serve, discount, gas-plus-full-service, gas-plus-bonuses or gas-plus-coupons? Dealers offer every variation on the theme.

Indeed, in one special case earlier this year, a gas-station owner in Mississauga, west of Toronto, dropped his price per gallon by two cents to any customer who paid in cash, a neat case of preferential treatment to one class out of all categories of purchasers on the same premises. The prices : 61.9 cents to credit-card users, 59.9 to money-on-the-barrelhead customers.

"Change," Don Foster says. "If I were looking for one word to describe what's going on in retail gasoline, that's the word I'd pick — change."

Don Foster should know. He is



automotive operations manager at Imperial Oil, the man who helps make decisions about the ways Imperial markets gasoline, and though he's obviously reveling in the challenge of dealing with new retailing conditions, he appreciates the necessity of oil companies stepping carefully, but rapidly, through the maze of fresh problems. Foster is a robust man with a booming voice and declarative manner.



"You have to recognize that the changes begin with the customers," he points out. "And the basic fact is that his car habits, the things he does with his vehicle, have been going through a revolution. Look what the car driver has got himself accustomed to since World War II – going to drive-in movies, to shopping plazas, to restaurants where a guy can have a burger and some fries without even moving from behind his wheel. All right, in the same way, our typical car driver has developed new routines in the methods he uses to service his vehicle. He drives to a fast car-wash spot for cleaning, to a pump at a shopping plaza for a quick fill, places like that. The point is that he doesn't necessarily want to patronize the same local gas station to get all the jobs done on his car – not anymore.

"Well, the first guy to catch on to these changes was the dealer who put up a sign over his place that just said GAS. He told people there'd be no credit cards and no free maps, he wouldn't lift up the hoods, and he wouldn't advertise on TV or sponsor hockey games. He'd just peddle a lot of gas cheaply. Well, some customers went for the idea, and it's the GAS

man's brainstorm that the major oil companies are catching up to today."

Imperial Oil's response to such customers and the changing market conditions has taken a variety of forms. This includes car-care clinics, car washes, Econo and Gain stations, and self-serve outlets.

Of all these new modes of selling gas, the one that is most visible – and rouses the most concern among some dealers – is the self-serve operation. As of early 1975, there were in the neighborhood of 550 self-serve outlets across Canada. The figures become even more staggering when you remember that, five years ago, self-serve in a commodity like gasoline was next to nonexistent in Canada.

"Yes, but it's an obvious social step," says Terry Moynihan, a soft-spoken, reserved man whose title at Imperial is investment planning manager. "People have grown accustomed to self-serve in supermarkets, in drugstores, record shops, any number of commercial dealings. It is simply an evolution in marketing, this self-service idea, that has now begun to happen in gasoline because we've got the technology to handle it."

"Look at it another way," Don Foster says. "The inevitable, continuing rise in the prices today is affecting the customer. The customer who is conscious of gasoline prices is rethinking where he buys his gas, and he's drifting from the service station to the cheaper, self-serve operation. Who can blame him?"

One group that may not *blame* this rethinking customer, but is out to *warn* him includes some of Canada's service-station dealers. They're the men who operate those four-pumps-and-two-bay outfits that stand – or used to stand – on a lot of busy corners, and they see the self-serve as a double-barreled troublemaker – as a threat to their livelihoods and as a menace to the safety of car-driving Canadians.

"We say there are serious hazards for the public in self-serve," argues Jim Stanford, who is secretary-treasurer of the Ontario Retail Gasoline Association, a body that represents a small (less than 10 percent) but vocal group of Ontario dealers. "Government regulations say, for example, that you can only put gas into specially labeled containers. But at self-serve places, people come along

and pump gas into plastic milk jugs, floor-cleaner cans, into anything that's handy, and there's nobody to tell them differently. And look at the other dangers – drivers who leave their engines running while they fill their tanks, drivers who smoke around pumps, who spill gas, who get into all sorts of potential trouble. Then you've got to realize that, with fewer fully equipped stations in business, you're going to have more cars on the road, getting less maintenance and less emergency service without even getting into the point that it's unnecessarily driving our people out of business."

Charles Hayles has the answer to the dealers' contention that self-serve represents a safety threat. Hayles is an assistant general manager, responsible for retail operations in Imperial's marketing department, and he points out, "The best reply I can make to the argument is to say that it simply hasn't proven to be the case. Two independent



reports published in the U.S. show that self-serve stations are at least as safe as conventional service stations. One stated that it did not uncover a single report of a fire at a service station where self-serve was involved in any way. It's one of those things that's very easy to say – that self-serve isn't safe – but the facts are on the other side."

The energy branch of the Ontario department of consumer and commercial relations pioneered self-service regulations in Canada. Faced with industry's request for self-service operations, they investigated in other countries and issued a regulation that has been used as a model in other

provinces. It is one of the strictest in the world. And it's enforced by inspectors who regularly visit each self-serve unit.

Hayles also addresses another argument raised by dealers against the large oil companies – the so-called "territory invasion" argument. The companies, according to the dealers, have too often opened stations that sell gas at a discount price within a block or two of a long-established outlet selling the companies' same product. The result is that the old, established dealer, who sells at a higher price, loses business and has no say in his fate – except to close shop.

"With our franchise dealers," Hayles says, "we have what is called a trading-area protection clause written into the agreement. The clause guarantees that if we open an Esso-brand station within one mile of an old station, then the proprietor of the established station may take over the new outlet. If he chooses not to, but would rather continue at his regular spot, then we agree to reimburse him to the extent that his net income falls below what he had been earning prior to the opening of the second station."

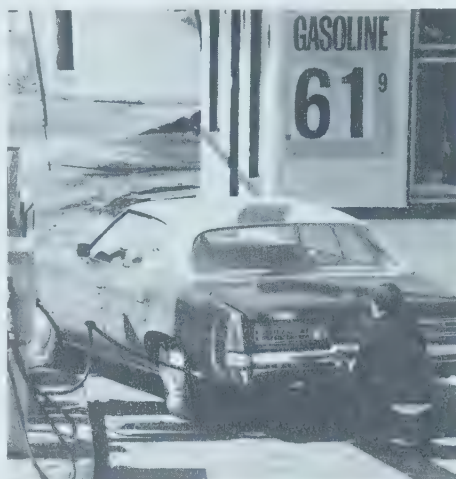
That's the story in the case of stations with the Esso oval hanging overhead. But what of Econo and Gain Stations, which after all, are Imperial owned? Have they been placed near established Esso dealers? The answer is yes. However, Imperial marketers point out



that, in their view, Econo and Gain stations attract a different kind of customer than those who patronize the full-service Esso stations.

Notwithstanding such counter-

arguments, the contentions of the dealers' associations have helped escalate the business of gasoline



retailing into what Don Foster labels "a very, very sensitive topic". Across the country, dealers' associations have begun to take their arguments against self-serve in particular and against the role of oil companies in retailing in general to provincial legislatures for government action. And the oil companies, Imperial among them, have stepped forward, as expected, to offer their views in rebuttal and try to improve understanding of the whole vexing issue.

Typically, the Automotive Retailers' Association of Alberta, an organization that speaks for approximately one-tenth of that province's dealers, presented the provincial government with a brief in late 1974 that had at its core this declaration: "In both Edmonton and Calgary, major oil companies are converting full-line service stations into company-operated, self-serve discount gas bars. We suspect the intent is not so much to serve a new consumer demand as to enter into unfair and potentially destructive competition both with their own dealers and with private-brand stations."

And what, according to the brief submitted by the dealer associations, is the ultimate aim of the oil companies in their current approach to gas marketing and price competition?

"1) To drive the major brand lessee operators out of business.

"2) To drive major brand operators also to the wall.

"3) To give the major oil companies that complete control of gasoline pricing and distribution to which they have long been moving."

Naturally, the entire story has many sides. Nobody senses them more than Bill West, Imperial vice-president and general manager of marketing. He's a strong advocate of the dealer system. "Good dealers are efficient operators," he says. "They care about their customers." On the other side, however, he points out that in many parts of Canada, dealer associations have advanced policies – sometimes through small groups that assume the leadership – which would restrict innovation and competition, limit hours of operation, and generally cut down the availability of service. The result? The customer loses through inconvenience and less accessibility to service.

The retail dealers' organizations are asking provincial legislatures to



curtail, if not ban, the activities of oil companies in direct retailing. In response, Imperial's own briefs establish a number of points that, boiled down, accomplish two aims: they present the economic facts of life in gas retailing and they place in perspective the current and future state of that tricky business.

Taking first things first – economics – a brief Imperial submitted to the B.C. government in November, 1974, pointed out that across Canada the so-called pacesetter operators (these are the smaller independent gas marketers, such as the pioneer who put up the first GAS sign) feature lower prices, bare-bones facilities, and low

overhead. These operators can turn a comfortable rate of return on their investment at margins of 10 to 12 cents on the gallon (the difference between their wholesale buying price and their retail selling price). "By comparison," the brief went on, "our typical Esso and Home stations require a combined wholesale-retail margin of about 16 to 20 cents per gallon to provide a satisfactory level of earnings to the dealer and adequate profitability to the company."

The handwriting for both Imperial and its station personnel is on the wall. "Failure to recognize the efficiency of such marketers," the brief emphasized, "sets up a condition of extreme vulnerability for both the oil company and its dealers — hence, the thrust for network restructuring to put in place facilities capable of competing into the future at reduced margins."

Does this mean that, in order to meet the pacesetters' challenge, Imperial intends to junk conventional stations and throw their dealers into massive unemployment?

The short answer is no. The longer answer, in which Imperial puts its current state and future plans into perspective, emerges from its B.C. brief, a document offering concepts that apply to all of Canada.

All told, there are about 5,500 Esso stations across the country, and of these, fewer than 200 fall into the category of direct Imperial-operated stations, 1,100 are operated by lessees, and 4,200 are operated by the people who own them.

The brief made clear that the number of Esso stations owned and operated by Imperial has declined during the past three years. And, what's more, "With the exception of self-serve stations, no significant expansion is contemplated." Self-serve is obviously in the works. "It is expected that, by 1980, there will be a further modest reduction in conventional stations, with an increase in self-serve to about 25 percent of the total." But Imperial's principal thrust, so the brief explained, is towards a balanced distribution of stations of all sorts to meet the varying demands of today's car drivers. The balanced network of stations will include sufficient service bays to look after motorists' maintenance needs.

"The improvement of productivity,"

the B.C. brief announced, "will be achieved by consolidating our operations into fewer locations in prime sites with, in some cases, expanded facilities."

In the face of this bombardment of points of view from the oil companies and dealers' associations, the response by provincial and municipal governments has been varied. In the Vancouver area for example, there are three differing positions. Richmond, a suburb of Vancouver, has prohibited self-serve completely, while Burnaby, another suburb, has decided to let the market determine the number of self-serves. In the middle of this, Vancouver city council (representing the city proper) voted to regulate the number of self-serves to 15 percent of the oil-company's total number of stations in the city. Feelings are bound to remain heated over the issues. Will there be more stations or fewer, lots of self-serve and not so many conventional units? And legislators, of all people, will have trouble avoiding a stand on such a sensitive social problem.

"Politicians drive cars too," Don Foster says. "And when they hear that an oil company is going to put the big ball through a favorite local dealer's station, it won't matter whether knocking down that station, relocating it, or converting it to self-serve is the sensible step in terms of service and economics. He's still going to speak up on behalf of the local guy. That's what I mean when



I say this is a touchy topic — it touches people where they live."

So it does, which is what took me to

my own "local guy" for a few instructive words. He's an ebullient Italian gentleman named Ernie and he runs, as a lessee, the station of the old familiar sort that stands at the intersection near my house. Yes, Ernie said, the self-serve across the way had cut into his business; not much, maybe by about 10 percent. Yes, he knew of other dealers who had lost their businesses; in fact, he had one such former dealer working on his staff. But, he smiled, the great majority of his old customers had stuck with him because, Ernie said, they appreciated his service. Or so he supposed.

It was just at that moment when the



doctor got into the act. He'd been listening to Ernie and me chat — his licence plate indicated he was a doctor — and he said he had something he wanted the two of us to hear.

"I appreciate these new self-serve outfits," the doctor said. "Use them myself sometimes because I don't want to pass up the saving. But I've also been a customer here at Ernie's for at least 15 years, and I'm not about to give up on him. I like the way his fellows take care of my car. And that's the whole point, don't you see? There's bound to be room in the market today — and I know times have changed — for both the cheaper gas operations and for the soundly run service stations like Ernie's. No reason why one can't live with the other."

And those Socratic words, I thought, ought to serve as a nifty guide to all sides in working out the dilemma in this perplexing business of gas retailing. □



Through rapids and rolling water

by Craig Oliver

Adventure on the great Nahanni River. Beautiful, sometimes wild. Two men challenge it. And survive



I first learned of the South Nahanni River in the summer of 1973. I had finished a backpack trip across the Chilcoot Trail, the famous Trail of '98, and in a Whitehorse bookstore, I came across *The Dangerous River* by Raymond M. Patterson. Fifty years ago, he was one of the first white men to go there, and his book is still the bible of the Nahanni, a detailed graphic account of his search for the lost gold of that river in the 1920s.

When I returned to Toronto from Whitehorse during that summer, I had dinner with a longtime friend, Tim

Kotcheff. I mentioned the Nahanni and the challenge it held. His first reaction was: "Why don't we do it?" From that moment until we hit the river a year later, neither of us wavered in our resolve.

The river was an obsession. Battling my way through rush-hour traffic, I daydreamed about paddling the Nahanni. Almost every night for a year, I read books and studied maps. I was fascinated with thoughts of the unknown waterfall twice the size of Niagara and by the dark tales of mysterious deaths as late as the 1940s

that had given names to the Headless Range and the Deadman's Valley Mountains. That's where the river cuts through on its turbulent 600-mile journey from the Yukon Mountains down across the Great Divide into the Liard and Mackenzie Rivers on the flatlands of the Northwest Territories.

To say that we faced some problems before embarking upon the journey is to put it mildly. Neither of us had ever been in a canoe. We had no knowledge of the woods, nor did we possess any ability at wilderness cooking or map reading. Worse still, we were both over-



The canoe and gear were loaded onto the light seaplane at Watson Lake



Eighteen-foot aluminum canoe

weight with barely the physical strength to lift a canoe, let alone portage it and hundreds of pounds of equipment for miles. We agreed to meet every week to draft a plan of attack that would give us all the skills we'd need; we planned weekly shopping expeditions for equipment.

Our very lives could depend upon the decisions we made months ahead of time. We spent weeks arguing the merits of each item of equipment. We bought the best down-filled sleeping bags on the market, and talked for hours with experts about the type and style of tent we should get, finally settling on a light nylon, three-man, wind-resistant tent with a tight, enclosed fly. We knew a warm and dry night's sleep is a key element to survival in the wilderness.

We had been friends for a number of years, and had gone through many harrowing work situations together, but were still concerned about our ability to get along on a prolonged trip in which the necessity for cooperation would join us together like Siamese twins. We would be completely dependent on each other. We spent long evenings trying to foresee possible disagreements. More than one team has broken up in bitter squabbles under pressure of wilderness survival, where even mundane matters can take on enormous significance, far out of proportion to their ordinary importance.

Twice the height of Niagara, powerful Virginia Falls is unknown to many Canadians





Two men and supplies, including nylon tent



The author took a bath in the Rabbit Kettle Hot Spring

Mountains flanking them, the canoeists camped on sandbars, surrounded by awe-inspiring scenery





The last of the three canyons where water swirls dangerously. This section of the winding Nahanni was the most exciting part of the journey

For example, Tim insisted he had to have a dessert after every meal. I've never eaten desserts and resented the need to carry so much extra weight. The compromise : Tim would put cans of fruit and many pounds of sweets in his pack and carry them himself. Later, a can of peaches would seem like the greatest delicacy I had ever tasted.

But our biggest handicap was lack of experience in a canoe. The best equipment and wilderness know-how would be useless if we were unable to handle the high waves, rapids, and rolling water of the Nahanni as it makes its way through three canyons that have walls shooting 2,000 feet straight up. We had to learn to canoe expertly, otherwise the trip could end in tragedy.

The people we contacted were of little help. Their sincere advice was that it was no task for novice canoeists. That advice was underlined for us during the first night of canoe training. It was a course for beginners on a small lake near Toronto. I had never dreamed, watching lovers canoeing across placid lakes, that there was so much difficulty in doing it well. We simply could not make the canoe go in a straight line. It kept going in circles, or running into the shoreline while we dissolved into angry disputes about which one of us was to blame. We argued over who should be in the bow or the stern, and rapidly lost confidence in our mutual ability. Our coach taught us critical

In a view from a mountaintop, Pulpit Rock juts out, forming a natural gateway that leads through the Mackenzie Mountains

manoeuvres by having us charge the canoe straight at buoys, using special techniques to avoid them at the last second. Each time we collided with the floating object, he reminded us that, had it been a rock on a fast-moving river, we would have been finished.

Gradually, over a period of months, we learned to master the many strokes necessary to handle a canoe in all conditions. We settled on Tim, with stronger arms and better eyesight, as bow man, and myself as stern man, since we felt I had a better knowledge of steering.

But the small lake wasn't a river, and we knew we needed practice under actual "combat" conditions. One sunny weekend in May found us with a group of rugged young men learning to master the art of white-water canoeing on the wild French River near Sudbury, Ont.

During the first day of the training course, we upset five times trying to negotiate a fast-moving narrow rapid on the French. During one upset, I broke a cardinal rule, and failed to hang on to the capsized canoe. For the first time, I learned what a helpless feeling it is to be carried underwater through a bad rapid. After 10 minutes, I was pulled from the icy water in the early stages of hypothermia – when the body temperature drops to abnormally low levels. Unable to move my arms or hands, and barely able to speak, I was picked up by the rescue canoe. We capsized many more times during that week learning the delicate art of ferrying and learning to use proper balance and correct strokes in fast waters. Our life jackets saved us, and we vowed never to take them off.

By early summer, we had collected all the equipment needed : packs, tents, and for carrying freeze-dried, fresh and canned food, a large wooden wanigan (supply chest) with a leather tumpline (strap) that went around the forehead. Our final task was to get in shape. So, in the final few months before the trip, we met each morning at a jogging track and were running two miles a day by July.

In mid-July, we left Toronto by air for Edmonton, and then to Watson Lake in the Yukon, jumping-off spot for the Nahanni. The last thing both of us did before leaving was to make out a

last will and testament.

Then, early one morning, we packed our gear in a light seaplane and set off for the Nahanni. Our canoe – a tough, 18-foot Grumman aluminum – was tied to the pontoon. Five hours later, we were dropped off at a small lake near the river. I'll never forget the mixed feelings of loneliness, fear, and exhilaration as our last link to civilization lifted off from the lake and left us in isolation. We slept that night in a silence so deep it was deafening.

The next day – our first in the wilderness – we experienced a near-disaster that shook our confidence. Even with map and compass, we were unable to find our way from the lake to the river. We spent the better part of the day seeking an exit, and failed. Frustrated and growing extremely irritated at ourselves, we pulled the canoe onshore to try walking a path to the river and return later for the equipment. Within a half-hour, we began to feel we were lost, and I worked out some compass directions.

As we grew more excited, Tim started to run, anxiously seeking the river or a lake. I tried to catch up, and fell over a log. Then, a hundred yards later, I realized during the fall our only compass had dropped out of my shirt pocket. I was unable to find my way back to the log ; everything looked the same. Tim was incensed at my stupidity, and we found ourselves near blows. Deep in the swampy woods, black flies and mosquitoes were everywhere, and we were totally lost.

We had been warned against the greatest enemy of inexperienced woodsmen – panic. It sweeps over you as physically as nausea, builds and feeds on itself and finally, even as you feel it happening, can carry you away into erratic behavior that kills. We were on the brink of it. We had no idea which direction to take ; the woods looked the same everywhere, and each step might be taking us deeper into the vastness of the Nahanni wilderness. Darkness was falling ; we were lost, confused, and near panic.

Perhaps it was cigars that saved us. We forced ourselves to sit down. Then, we each smoked a cigar from our precious supply, while we tried to recapture our senses and, in some degree of calm, work out a plan of action. The solution was simple. I had read that

animal trails made in the woods were not there by accident, but to serve a purpose. We knew we were between a lake and a river, and guessed the moose and bear trails would probably go from one to the other at some point. We decided to follow a trail and stay with it no matter what. It took lots of nerve as the trail we picked seemed to be going in circles. But, by nightfall, it led us to the wide, brown, and fast-flowing Nahanni. Next morning, another trail took us back to our canoe on the lake-shore, and we portaged it to the river.

The days following were serene and beautiful. The strong sun of the brief Arctic summer was hot on the Nahanni. We camped on sandbars beside some of the highest mountains on the continent in the most awe-inspiring scenery I had ever seen. The wind was up on the rivers and bars, so we were not bothered by flies. We ate large meals of spaghetti, beans and bacon, canned meats and vegetables. We sat in front of the campfire talking until midnight, then slept in the comforting security of a tent while wolf packs howled in the distance. This was the wide and peaceful upper Nahanni, and we knew that tough days and dangerous water lay ahead. But first, two natural features of the trip were to fascinate us – the legendary year-round Rabbit Kettle Hot Spring and the beautiful Virginia Falls.

Rabbit Kettle Hot Spring was reached by tracking our canoe against the current (walking along the shoreline and using ropes to pull the canoe) up the wild Rabbit Kettle River. It took us five hours to reach the spring and about 15 minutes to come back that night. At the junction of the Rabbit Kettle and another small river, we followed an old Indian trail through the thick woods, in search of the hot spring. In the middle of unbroken trees and swampland, we suddenly came across a wall of limestone, elaborately carved by sulfuric water. It looked like a medieval castle looming above us. It's flat on top with hot pools hundreds of feet deep down through the stone, from which warm water bubbles all year.

It was easy to understand why the ancient Indian tribes had worshipped here. The swamp-like vegetation and warm springs in the midst of a deep Arctic winter were the source of tales about a hidden tropical Garden of

Eden, a Shangri-la in the Arctic, a warm tropical forest in the centre of the thousands of miles of frozen Arctic wilderness.

After leaving Rabbit Kettle Hot Spring, we looked forward to reaching Virginia Falls. During the two days of paddling along the way, we could hear it roar. Twice the height of Niagara, vastly more powerful, it is undoubtedly one of the great waterfalls of the world. Someday, it may become a major tourist attraction of the North American continent; yet it is unknown to most Canadians. Already, one enterprising businessman from Fort Simpson takes tourists for a two-day trip to the falls in shallow-draft, aluminum jet boats. As we passed one on the river, it circled around us while American tourists took pictures of two bearded men in worn-out stetsons.

That night, we camped on a ledge jutting out over the falls and met a team of biologists from the federal government parks service, from whom we learned the Nahanni was to be made Canada's newest national park. They told us it was hoped the river would be preserved for a special breed of outdoorsmen. One of their main tasks was to develop campsites for future park users, and they indicated the park would be open to motorboats as well as canoes. We realized then that those of us on the river that summer might be among the last to experience it as a wilderness area still full of moose and bears so unfamiliar with humans they were almost tame.

The enormous amount of energy generated by the big falls is dissipated in the three canyons through which the river swirls, and there, we knew, lay the most exciting and dangerous part of our journey.

The first day among the rapids and standing waves of canyon number one was terrifying. It never seemed to end. The canyon walls were sheer and 2,000 feet high. The river squeezed through, forming five-foot waves, breaking from everywhere, and rushing in and out between the canyon walls. Water seemed to come from all directions. Plunging through, we shouted instructions until we were hoarse. As the water splashed off the canyon walls, it exposed enormous, deep gorges, then crashed back to fill them in again. To be caught between

the wall of a canyon and the onrushing water could mean capsizing and, perhaps, death.

During that 10 miles, we hopscotched from one tiny bit of shoreline to another, emptying the canoe of hundreds of pounds of water that could destroy balance and sink it. I was terrified as we negotiated the canyon, and my mouth became so dry I was unable to swallow. My companion had to force water down my throat to prevent me from choking. It was the worst canyon on the Nahanni, awesome and exhilarating. The river moved so fast as we were on a different time scale. Objects far ahead were upon us in seconds. A decision to reach a point of land had to be made far in advance, or we were swept by. Yet, there was no real sense of movement.

On our last day, the river was moving in full flood, and we covered 70 miles in 12 hours. The flooding had washed away hundreds of enormous trees, which were making the trip with us. Some became stuck in the river bottom. To canoeists, these deadheads are as dangerous as icebergs to an ocean liner. We had to dodge them constantly.

When we reached the tiny Indian settlement of Nahanni Butte, with a population of 50, Indian children ran away at the sight of us – two bearded, mud-covered, and very tired men. At the local store, I bought the first dry socks I had worn in a week. Tim drank pop as if he'd never see another bottle. Both of us, being journalists, were anxious for the latest news. An Indian told us U.S. President Richard Nixon had resigned. We were back in civilization, having missed one of the biggest stories of the century.

For a time, at least, we had submerged our identities and found a kind of freedom in the wilderness. We had met a great river's challenge, and survived. □

In calm waters, with canyon walls shooting straight up on both sides, the trip was nearing an end, and the travelers posed for a photograph



The country likes the benefits of affluence. But it's becoming dis

Second thoughts

It's just about a quarter-century now since I graduated from university. I was a brand-new geologist. Along with my fellow graduates from the University of Manitoba, I had two tremendous gifts. One was youth, that wonderful attribute each of us holds for all too brief a time. The other was education, the marvellous acquisition of training and discipline of the mind.

Like most of my friends and classmates of 25 years ago, I had a lot of ideas about a lot of things. In the years that have elapsed, some of these ideas have survived, some have been modified, some have been discredited. And believe it or not, I gained a few new ones during those years.

I've been fortunate during my adult life in several ways. One is that I've had a reasonably wide variety of jobs. I've been a laborer, a miner, a geologist, a planner, and an executive. I've been exposed to a great many people in many places, and I've usually traded ideas with them: laborers, scientists, academics, farmers, industrialists, politicians, activists, and soldiers.

As a result of those years of experience, I've made my share of observations, and reached conclusions about a number of things; in particular, social values. I'm interested in the changing values of our time, and how the values now emerging and commonly held will equip us for the events to take place in the remainder of the 1970s and into the 1980s.

To begin, let's examine the values Canadians held during the late 1940s and the 1950s. At that time, social attitudes were obviously conditioned by the war that had just ended. Memories of what we regarded as a normal life were based on the prewar years, and were largely influenced by the Great Depression of the 1930s. Not surprisingly, domestic goals and objectives were aimed at improving our economic standards.

Attitudes towards international affairs were dominated by the effects of the Cold War. No sooner had the western countries saved the world for democracy – for the second time in 25 years – than they perceived themselves threatened again. It was a time of great international tension. The threat that any conflict could be fought with nuclear weapons forced brand-new attitudes about armed conflict as a means for settling international disputes.

It was probably during the 1950s that human beings began to develop a love/hate relationship with technology. We loved it because technology and management expertise were creating ever-growing wealth and higher standards of living. At the same time, I think we began to hate it because technology spawned the threat of nuclear war. Also, much of technology was terribly difficult to comprehend, and many professed to find it a bit of a bore.

As economic growth continued into the 1960s, perhaps the biggest change in social attitudes in Canada and other economically developed countries was a growing regard for the quality of life, coupled with a decrease in emphasis on those efforts contributing to economic betterment. This thought is a bit tricky, to me at least, and needs careful examination. What was happening was probably not a loss of desire for continued economic improvement in any widespread sense, but rather a feeling that it could be taken for granted. I doubt very much if any significantly large segment of society seriously desired to give up the benefits of continued economic growth. But I do think a great segment began to assume it would continue automatically.

In addition to this decrease in the popularity of wealth creation and the emphasis on it, the process itself became the object of some mistrust. This mistrust began to manifest itself in several ways. During the 1950s, for instance, novels and

enchanted with the very process that allowed affluence to happen

On new attitudes

by D. K. McIvor

motion pictures began to characterize business and industry as the domain of ruthless and conniving people. Catch-phrases such as “rat race” and “corporate jungle” were popular. Even ostensibly scholarly non-fiction works such as *The Organization Man* by William Whyte and *The Power Elite* by C. Wright Mills promoted the idea that business and industry were not the most socially uplifting segments of society.

The growing emphasis on the quality of life was a very desirable aspect of our social evolution because, after all, the only reasonable and defensible use for the benefits of economic activity is the improvement of the human condition. However, what was astounding in retrospect was that it began to contain a corollary disrespect for the very process that allowed it to happen.

It occurs to me that the phenomenon I’m trying to describe can be formulated as McIvor’s Law, which states: long periods of affluence weaken stimuli to competitive or acquisitive behavior, and may provoke a reaction against such behavior.

However, democratic governments correctly perceived what was happening as the will of the people, and once a government thinks it perceives the will of the people, there is a thundering stampede to satisfy it. The combination of growing affluence, a focus on the quality of life, and democratic government came to an inevitable consequence – the attempted satisfaction of virtually every perceived social desire. Society legislated attempts to cure most of life’s ills. We even decided many of the moral concepts we had built up were unnecessarily constraining, and we dumped them. In general, we sought after universal affluence, full employment, education for all, adequate health care, and freedom from the value judgments of others.

But as we settled into these new attitudes, two things happened. One was we didn’t seem to be any happier, just greedier. I think by now virtually every collection of individuals with characteristics identifiable as even a loosely coherent group has made its demands heard for more freedom and wealth, or both. Few of them are able to describe the benefits they can bring to society; all of them express with force and vigor the demands they expect society to meet.

The second factor evident with the new attitudes was the apparent conclusion that the very process permitting it all to happen – the wealth-creation process – is socially undesirable. This is manifested in many ways. Financial profit, the engine driving the whole process by creating new funds for taxes, reinvestment, and rewards to investors, has become anathema to many people. For a while, technology became so unpopular that university enrolment in science and engineering declined even further than in the other disciplines. Industry attracted regular attention for its mistakes, but almost none for its contributions.

There is another very important social trend that has taken place since World War II. This trend can be appreciated by comparing two schools of thought regarding the best means for conducting a nation’s wealth-generating activities.

One school holds that wealth generation is best accomplished by a large number of participants competing with one another within guidelines established by a central agency, that is, a government. This competition is held to encourage efficiency, lowest consumer prices, and innovation and creativity, since those participants who are least efficient and creative, and whose prices are unnecessarily high will fail and be replaced. Within this school of thought, profits are encouraged, since they are the source of taxes, funds for reinvestment, and a reward for investors. Profits are also one



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measure of success — the hallmark of a company that does the right thing in the right way.

The other school of thought holds that controlled direction of the economy is more important, and that individual decision making supplemented by a collective entrepreneurial thrust is less important. So it follows that profits are unimportant, and rewards should be captured mainly by the public purse. To say it another way, this philosophy urges governments to take as much of the rewards as is possible without actually driving the participants out of business. This approach makes for a stagnant economy.

It is not very difficult to understand why the second school of thought has become more popular than the first. For one thing, there is the tremendously greater requirement for taxes to support what I have described as "the new attitudes". In 1950, spending by all three levels of government in Canada accounted for 21 percent of Canada's Gross National Product (GNP) of \$19 billion. By 1973, governments accounted for 38 percent of the GNP, which had then grown to \$119 billion. GNP rose by a factor of six; government spending by a factor of ten.

The other important piece of understanding is that an ever-increasing number of university graduates are choosing to work in governments where they will be redistributing

wealth rather than in industry where they could be generating it. With large numbers of highly educated people competing with one another to spend government revenues, it's small wonder taxes have risen to the point where they leave little of the benefits to those who create new wealth.

In a sense, we have been on a binge since the end of World War II, a binge in which we've tried to satisfy our every want, private and public, social and economic, a binge that has led somehow to the widespread belief that the wealth-creation process, which allowed us to satisfy these wants, isn't very desirable.

If the past decades represent a binge, the new environment in Canada and around the world indicates we are going to suffer from a hangover in the 1970s and 1980s. Beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s, some cracks in our foundations began to be apparent.

First, there was growing evidence that the new attitudes evoked programs that were very expensive and not working as intended. For instance, the much-liberalized unemployment insurance system, designed to shelter the unemployed, has made it more acceptable for some to remain unemployed than to work; it has led to a less-efficient way of utilizing the nation's work force. In short, the new attitudes have started to erode national productivity.

Second, we began to perceive that the economy was not responding to actions based on economic theory. Perhaps the biggest item here was that we found we couldn't control inflation. I think I know why. We were devoting such a large share of our resources to socially desirable, but economically non-productive, undertakings that the productivity of our total investments failed to grow at the pace necessary to support the needs of both continued wealth generation and large social programs. With demands far exceeding supply, we have, in effect, financed our expectations through increasing the money supply, with resulting inflation runaways.

Third, and by far the most important, it is becoming increasingly apparent that we have been living on a low-cost inventory of commodities — oil, metals, food, etc. Replacement of these inventories is going to cost a lot more than it used to. At the same time, demand for these commodities will grow because populations are continuing to grow.

My conclusion from all this is that we're going to be hard-pressed to maintain our current standard of living, let alone improve it. I doubt very much if it will be possible to replace inventories of food, fuel, metals, and other commodities from expensive new sources while simultaneously eroding productivity and discouraging wealth generation.

If you think I'm simply playing with words, examine the

The only reasonable and defensible use for economic activity is the

record of the United Kingdom since World War II. The high cost of their current fuel bill isn't the basic cause of their economic malaise; it's simply another crippling blow. In the United Kingdom, they've been spending money for social programs their wealth-creation process simply can't support, so they are falling behind more and more. Their attempts to cure this situation by frequent bouts of socialism and nationalization aggravate the problem rather than improve it. Nationalizing any industry in trouble will not cure it, because nationalization doesn't get to the root of the problem. If an industry is in trouble, it is very likely because it became inefficient on its own, or was forced into inefficiency by ill-conceived legislation. Adding the further inefficiency often accompanying nationalization will not cure this sort of sickness.

I've been adopting the role of Chicken Little up until this point. I've been saying, "The sky is falling!" It would be much more productive if I suggested what we in Canada could do to prevent the sky from falling. Let me specify some collective actions we can take to try and preserve our standard of living. First, we must recognize that profit is what motivates the wealth-generation process. Profit is the source of taxes, funds for reinvestment, and rewards to investors. With this understood, we can agree that the wealth-creation process is a vital and respectable endeavor in our society and is, in fact, the source of the funds we use to obtain social betterment.

I think most people will agree that a wealth-redistribution process is a necessity in any society, but I think the process in Canada could be greatly improved to our collective benefit. We need better methods and institutions to affect cooperation and to prevent confrontation. I don't think we can afford to continue the squabbles that arise when segments of our society bring pressures to bear in order to get a bigger share of Canada's economic well-being. For instance, can we afford to have two levels of government squabbling over which does what to whom in natural-resource taxation when the real issue is the country's desperate need for large new supplies of these resources?

Also, wealth redistribution might be better accomplished if we weigh more carefully the costs and benefits of social programs in order to choose among them, and then choose programs with total costs we are able to meet. In addition, we might find it productive to insist on stewardship reports on those programs under way. How well are they doing? We have a long, undistinguished history in the expenditure of public funds that includes HMCS Bonaventure, the unemployment insurance fund, low-interest loans to oil-rich Iran,

Churchill Forest Industries, and others. We owe it to ourselves to do better.

Canada's wealth-generation activities should be conducted in a more stable governmental environment. We do not live in a laissez-faire world, and governments have responsibility and a mandate to provide general guidelines and ground rules. But a degree of sanity and stability should replace the current atmosphere where the rules change almost monthly, where the general attitude of governments toward investors is one of saying: "Here is what we may, or on the other hand may not, allow you to do." This is really abdication of responsibility masquerading as resolve to protect the public interest.

I think Canadians must rededicate themselves to the idea that the work ethic should have a prominent place in our social fabric. We simply aren't going to be able – and in any case, we probably aren't going to be willing – to continue to support people who don't want to work. Conversely, I think the nation ought to be prepared to reward those who do.

Business must accept its fair share of responsibility. With certain notable exceptions, such as the mining industry, the performance of the private sector in describing its role in Canadian society has been absolutely terrible. For instance, the fact that the role of profits in society has become so grossly misunderstood, the fact that businessmen have allowed the idea of large fluctuations in profits to be manipulated to our disadvantage means we've done a dreadful job of communication. However, that's one of the reasons I'm making this argument – to try to improve this communication.

For almost 30 years, Canadians have taken wealth creation for granted and assumed it would just keep growing. The country has shown a ravenous appetite for the benefits of growing affluence, but by some strange quirk has become disenchanted with the very process that allowed it all to happen. Now we're entering a new era. There aren't any more cheap resources, and we're going to have to replace our inventory of them at much higher cost. To maintain our present standard of living under these conditions – let alone improve it – is going to require much more work, discipline, and enlightened public policy than we've become used to.

However, maybe what's happening will be beneficial to Canada in the long run. The new environment I've described will present a tremendous challenge to every citizen. Perhaps, in meeting the challenge, we'll become a positive society with a sense of national purpose, rather than a loose aggregation of pressure groups fighting over our national economic spoils. □

Improvement of the human condition



Last November, workers erected "horsehead" oil-well pumps at the Leming plant, part of Imperial's newest pilot program at Cold Lake, Alta.

Reaching the heavy oil

At Cold Lake, Alta.,
a method of drilling that
is neither easy nor cheap.
But necessary

About 180 miles northeast of Edmonton, near Cold Lake, Alta., where numerous small lakes dot a landscape full of muskeg, Imperial Oil is extracting heavy oil from deeply buried sands, oil that cannot be recovered in the traditional way.

The Cold Lake sands contain one of the largest oil deposits in Canada, estimated by the Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board at 164 billion barrels of oil in place. (Only the Athabasca tar sands exceed this, with 626 billion barrels, according to the Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board.) Not all of the 164 billion barrels at Cold Lake will be recoverable. Only a fraction of the oil may be recoverable from these sands. Nevertheless, it may make an important contribution to total Canadian supplies in the decade between 1980 and 1990 as production from existing conventional sources continues to decline. But heavy oil is not easily wrested from the earth. It is too thick to be pumped, too deeply buried to be mined and taken elsewhere to process.

Imperial has spent about \$35 million since 1964 experimenting with potential

extraction methods. Currently, injecting steam at 600 degrees Fahrenheit and 1,600 pounds-per-square-inch pressure seems to hold the most promise. The steam is pumped into a well, the sand is heated, and the thick oil thins and is brought to the surface mixed with water.

Several companies have experimented with heavy-oil recovery using steam-injection methods similar to Imperial's. And other production methods have been tried. Some companies have experimented with "in-situ combustion" in which the oil in the sand is ignited after injecting compressed air into the reservoir. The resulting combustion process is controlled by the amount of air injected. In other efforts, solvents have been injected into the sands. There has even been consideration of using underground nuclear detonations to heat and mobilize the viscous oil. Imperial continues to examine most of these ideas, but current field research is focused on using steam injection.

After about a month of steam injection, a well can be productive for approximately three months, although a

few have production cycles of up to a year. During this time, a mixture of oil and water is brought to the surface for separation. When a well cools and can no longer be pumped, steam is reinjected and the process is repeated.

When Imperial first went into Cold Lake, four wells were drilled and injected with steam from a portable generator. This pilot project—named Ethel after a nearby lake—was expanded in 1967. A steam plant was built to take water from Ethel Lake and convert it to steam for injection.

This operation continued until 1970 when it was shut down for reassessment. That didn't mean Cold Lake had been abandoned. Back in Edmonton, a small group of technical people were analyzing the mass of data collected to determine what modifications might result in improved performance. The result was the 23-well May pilot program (also named after a lake) that the company embarked upon in 1971.

The May pilot is about a half-mile from the Ethel steam plant. A distribution system carries the steam from the

plant to the wells. The pipe is insulated and covered with aluminum sheeting to help retain its heat. A separate line directs the produced oil-water mixture to oil-water separation and treating facilities adjacent to the steam plant.

Because temperatures in the lines may vary as much as 400 degrees, both oil and steam lines have expansion loops to provide for the movement caused by expansion and contraction stresses. The line jogs out at right angles for a few feet, and then jogs back in. The jogs absorb thermal stresses which a straight line would not tolerate.

Only one line connects each well to the steam source and production facilities. During injection, it carries steam; during production it carries oil and water. The May pilot has been producing up to 1,500 barrels a day, two-thirds of which is trucked to Lloydminster for sale in the heavy-oil market. One-third is burned to generate steam to produce more oil.

And now there's the new Leming pilot program (named after a nearby lake, of course) where Imperial drilled 56 wells. Steam injection began there in early

January, 1975. Production started in April.

Leming also has its own steam plant on the site, but this is fired by natural gas. And some gas is being injected into the wells along with the steam. "We think the gas assists the movement of oil in the reservoir and increases the recovery rate," says Bob Peterson, Cold Lake operations manager.

At the Leming pilot, 56 wells occupy seven acres each. That's 392 acres, enough to constitute an area a mile long and more than a half-mile wide. With previous development methods, the terrain would have been covered with a maze of roads, pipes, and wellheads. Today, an aerial photograph of the site shows only an access road with branches to a plant and eight patches in the bush. Visit these patches and you'll find the central feature of each is a gravel-covered dirt pad with seven conventional "horsehead" oil-well pumps sitting on it side by side, together with a "satellite" building containing a piping manifold that directs steam to each of the wells and similarly accepts production from each well.

What you are seeing are seven oil wells on a site of less than two acres, spaced just far enough apart to allow servicing, yet draining oil from nearly 50 acres.

How is it done?

By directional drilling. Of the seven wells drilled from each of the eight pads, only one goes straight down. The other six holes curve out from the central pad to six points underground. They are so spaced that the bottom of each hole is 600 feet from the centre and 600 feet from its neighbor. That 600-foot spacing is maintained not only for the wells radiating out from each pad, but is the distance between each of the 56 wells in the Leming project.

This drilling pattern is not a sudden inspiration. It was developed over the years as oilmen sought ways to get more oil from the earth at less cost to the environment and as economically as possible. Thus, the May project showed an advance in drilling methods from its predecessor, Ethel, just as Leming is an advance over May.

An aerial view of the May pilot gives the appearance of two connecting snow-

These seven pumps sit on a gravel pad, occupy less than two acres and, thanks to directional drilling, pump oil from nearly 50 acres





With Ethel Lake outlined in the background, a steam line, showing the expansion loop, leads to the wellhead

flakes, although each flake has eight arms instead of six. This configuration is the result of the topography and what is known as five-spot drilling. This is a pattern made by drilling four wells in a square with a fifth in the centre. At the May pilot, Imperial crews drilled 23 wells on five-spot patterns in four adjacent rows. Each pattern is interlocked with the next.

But why bother with these intricate patterns? Why not just space the wells at convenient distances?

First, the object is to extract the maximum amount of oil from beneath the surface, without leaving any pockets beyond the reach of a well. Then, in the Cold Lake muskeg and bush, each time a well is drilled, a path must be built to carry steam to the wells and the oil-water mixture back to the separator building. Roads must be built to maintain the lines and pumps. The roads must be kept clear of snow.

The more you cut down this surface network, the less expense and the less disturbance to the environment.

However, the surface cost saving at Leming is offset underground. Direc-

tional drilling is neither easy nor cheap. Ordinarily, a drill bit is fixed onto a drill pipe, and the drill bites into the ground as the length of pipe revolves. Generally, it descends in a straight line with minor deviations caused by changes in the formation. In directional drilling at Leming, the bit goes straight down for only about 300 feet. Then, a joint near the bit allows the driller to set it at an angle. Drilling mud, which is used in all rotary-drilling operations to lubricate the bit, fill up the annulus around the pipe, and bring up the rock cuttings, has an additional function in directional drilling. It is directed against the bit in a way that causes it to revolve while the pipe moves down the hole without rotating.

Once the directional angle of the hole is set, it is possible to revert to conventional drilling with the drill pipe rotating as it follows the bit into the ground. The pipe is flexible enough to accommodate itself to the angle. Readings are taken periodically with a gyroscope-type device to make sure the well is on target.

At Leming, the drill penetrates the oil-bearing sands at an angle of about 30

degrees. When it reaches its destination at the 1,500-foot level, the drill will have gone about 1,800 feet.

"You run a risk in the deviated hole," says Bob Peterson. "Getting stuck is always a potential problem in drilling, and it's more of a problem when the well is at an angle."

Only after the Leming pilot is sufficiently into production will Imperial know its level of success. The company is hoping for 4,000 barrels a day to be shipped to its new Strathcona refinery in Edmonton as feedstock for asphalt. Added to May and a few wells still producing at Ethel, that should mean a total production from Cold Lake of 5,000 barrels daily. But while production is important, the principal purpose of the Leming pilot is to develop technical understanding and confidence that could lead to large-scale operations in the future.

"It's not a money-making deal today," points out Peterson, "but we hope we can develop it into a commercial process."

Meanwhile, technical know-how must keep advancing. □

in closing

Every summer, just as June ends and the schools are out, a memory comes to me that the years of time do not fade and experience does not dim. It is not a memory of school vacation or dreamy summers of youth at home in Nova Scotia. It is the memory of a train, an old train, red and faded from the weather, swaying slowly through the gray woods of June, on past the house where we lived, and on to the chill and sunless sea.

Sometimes, in my childhood, the train came in the night, its whistle gentle in the sleep of a child, but rousing the men of the house – my grandfather and my uncles – who would wash and dress and murmur to the dark, and then leave the house silent, as they boarded the train for the coal mines of Glace Bay some seven miles away. I would listen as they left the village, the last whistle of the train fading upon the marshes that stretched beyond the house.

All day I would wait for its return. Sometimes we would gather, the friends of childhood and, placing an

ear to the track, listen and persuade ourselves that, at that moment, the train was crawling out of the station, soon to rumble across the trestle toward the lake, so that shortly our fathers and uncles would be back, home for supper and then as the sun left its last flame upon the rooftops we would gather, all of us, for softball in the fields.

Taking the miners to work and home again was, so far as a child could tell, the life and purpose of the train. We called it the Hobo, but I never knew why. In those years of the forties, there wasn't a child in the village who did not know the Hobo. In some families, every man rode it daily, going in the dark in the earliest hours of morning and coming again in the late afternoon. I grew up with the train, and it spoke to me. It reminded all of us who we were, the children of the mine. I would watch it, learning to welcome its coming, but to stand clear when it came. Its whistle was as familiar in that village, as the barking of the dogs, the perfume of early lilac, the squeak of a garden swing.

It was the greatest of trains and it was the least. It crossed no continent, not even a county. It had no dome car, no dining coach, not even a conductor to command the cars, punch the tickets,

and see to the unruly. In fact, it had no windows, at least no windows by which you sat to look out upon the dust-dry soil, the gardens with their scarecrows, and the women hanging clothes in the salt-sea wind.

The men sat on benches. The benches lined the walls, so that they swayed with the slow and gentle motion of the train. It traveled so slowly that sometimes people joked that if you sat on the steps to the cars, you could pick blueberries on the trip from Glace Bay to Morien. This was never really proven, perhaps never tested. The only light inside filtered from tiny windows high overhead. Some men sang, some told stories, some were silent, perhaps dreaming of days they were sure would be better.

I knew the train in ways most of my friends did not. It was not only part of my uncle's life and my grandfather's, but of my father himself. He was what was called with a measure of dignity

"the paymaster". Usually, he paid the miners at the pithead, but sometimes in summer, before the men went on their vacations, he would take a heavy box and drive to the shanty in Morien, he and Angus MacAulay, a huge presence of a man who carried a revolver, the symbol of his office as company policeman. I would go with them, and parked beside the shanty where the men left the train and trudged home, my father would roll down the window and hand out the brown envelopes.

There was also a man named Cliff Townsend, the brakeman, who lived at our house. He was a veteran of World War I, a victim of the gas, an intelligent man who carried his handicap with grace and humor. Most of all though, he was generous to children. And so, most afternoons, the neighborhood youngsters gathered at the track just at the lane beyond where we lived. As the old Hobo approached, Cliff would spot us, slow the train to a crawl, finally stopping and helping us all on board for the final ride to the shanty.

I would peer inside the gloom of the cars until I spotted a relative, usually my Uncle Herbie, and he would make room for us on the bench, and we would talk about his racehorse, or the days when he played football, or whether Max

Bentley was as good as he used to be. Then we would land at the shanty and walk home on the dusty, sun-warmed road.

Life separated me from the Hobo. But wherever I went and whenever I could, I took a train so that I might look out upon the land, the immense and lonely distances of India, the deep mysterious Siberian taiga, waiting as it has for centuries with its stern and quiet stare. I long for the train so that in the midst of the rush of events, I may find time, space, a moment to see. I want to see the small towns, not escape them, to look out on the backyards where men and women sit on back porches staring through twilight.

Sometimes in small towns whose names I cannot recall now, I have come down from a train and walked the streets. I have stood on corners and watched mothers and daughters at weddings and men talking quietly at funerals. I touch, sense, perhaps even feel, the humaneness of life that, even in difficult times, can never be lost.

At home in Cape Breton, the old Hobo died. Men removed the rust-brown tracks. The station crumbled,

and the alders grew where it was. It seemed gone forever, just as my father had gone and his friend Angus and the brakeman who lived at our house.

Then, last summer, I returned and found the track had been laid again, the shanty had been rebuilt, and the train was running as before, filled with children and adults from all over Canada, riding the train of my boyhood out of Glace Bay to Morien. When you go there, you will not find my father or Angus or Cliff. But Herbie will be there, my uncle, standing on the platform, welcoming you and recalling for all who care, a part of his life as old as our house beside the track and as recent as the fields in spring.

Kenneth Bagwell

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Imperial Oil Review

1975 NUMBER 4

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Saturday Night editor Robert Fulford. His gratitude, he says, won't influence his editorial policy

Last autumn, Imperial Oil granted \$100,000 to aid the survival of *Saturday Night* magazine – a cause seemingly as unassailable as motherhood, the Canadian flag, or fresh milk for school lunches. And the grant indeed helped keep the faltering publication alive. But the subsequent flurry of controversy across the land points up the dilemma facing any corporate gift-giver today.

Canadian corporations, reports the *Financial Times of Canada*, donate about \$72 million a year for various good works. In the past, much corporate philanthropy has been governed more by reflex action than by logic. Now, as the economy and government regulations force many businesses to tighten their belts, they are taking a new, searching look at corporate donations. And so is an increasingly cynical public.

Should a company support “worthy” causes and, if so, which ones? What motives should underly such donations: self-interest or sheer charity? How will the public perceive those motives – or does it matter? The *Saturday Night* affair holds some of the answers as they apply to Imperial. It makes an interesting case history.

It began somewhat by chance on Oct. 8, 1974, when Imperial's public affairs manager, Robert Landry, found James Knight, head of print communications deep in gloom.

“What's the matter?” Landry asked.

“*Saturday Night's* going to fold,” said Knight. After 87 years in print – the last of them deep in debt – *Saturday Night* needed \$400,000 to attempt a new revitalized publication. No such sum was in sight. A magazine that had made a significant impact on Canadian culture was about to die.

Landry paused. He stared through the window. Then slowly, he turned. “So I hear,” he said. “I've been thinking about it, too. Do you think there's any way we could help?”

Knight grabbed the phone. On the other end of the line, his longtime friend, *Saturday Night* editor Robert Fulford, seized on the possibility. Soon Fulford and his publisher, Ed Cowan, were presenting their case to Imperial.

The company then launched into the hard-nosed analysis it applies to every prospective donation.

On the face of it, this seemed an easy decision. Imperial donated \$2.5 million in 1974 to causes it felt were worthy. The idea of backing a magazine of the arts was not outlandish: in 1973, Imperial gave \$70,000 to produce one superb edition of *artscanada* magazine devoted to Indian and Eskimo shamanic art, and now slated to become an educational reference book.

Furthermore, since *Saturday Night's* fate had mushroomed into a national and emotional issue, the Imperial gift seemed likely to attract some good press. But the company directors were not inclined toward buying goodwill. (Were this so, Imperial would have milked publicity from its heavy support of the arts, education, and charity during the many years it has been giving; in fact, it has maintained a very low profile.) Now, the only concern, as one company director put it, was: "Does this magazine have a chance of survival, or are we pouring money down a rathole?"

After intensive study of *Saturday Night's* books, the comptroller's department said the financial prospects looked sound. What about management and editorial plans? Fulford, Knight told the board, is "one of the ablest editors in Canada". Cowan, an imaginative advertising man and a founder of Toronto's CITY-TV, had a good track record. The magazine's prospectus called for better design, more serious Canadian fiction, and better-researched

articles on business, economics, and other thoughtful subject matter.

By the end of October, the evidence was in and the directors were convinced. Imperial could have invested money in *Saturday Night*, but this might have implied a connection between the company and the editorial policy of the magazine. And Imperial had no desire to dabble in the content of *Saturday Night*. So it opted for a one-time, no-strings-attached, \$100,000 grant to be channeled through the Canada Council.

"It is our opinion that *Saturday Night* ranks as a Canadian institution of unique value, particularly in its coverage of books and films," wrote Senior Vice-President Warren Flanagan in a letter verifying the grant. "Your future plans promise a periodical that will fill a void no other Canadian magazine is filling . . . We wish *Saturday Night* well."

The reaction was surprisingly mixed. Fulford and Cowan were elated, of course. They raised the additional \$300,000 (a condition of the Imperial grant) and resumed publication in 1975. The *Halifax Chronicle Herald* complimented Imperial as "a solid corporate citizen". The *Financial Post* thought it all smacked of "great public relations". The Kingston *Whig-Standard* found it "rather ironic that a multinational corporation — the blight of flag-waving Canadian nationalism — should become the financial saviour of the supposed champion of flag-waving nationalism". An outraged Vancouver nationalist offered to give *Saturday Night* \$10 if it

would deduct an equal amount from the Imperial grant. ("Idiotic!" responded Fulford.) And some Imperial shareholders demanded to know why the company should give \$100,000 of their money to a magazine with a tenuous future.

Why indeed? Or, why should Imperial give \$10,000 to help make a 30-minute film on dental therapy in the North? Or \$45,000 for a new National Ballet production, *Whispers of Darkness*? Or \$175,000 over five years for a study of systems research as it may be applied to medicine in Canada?

These and a thousand other things like them reflect the other side of Imperial — the side not devoted to producing energy and chemicals for Canada. They are rooted deeply in a company philosophy that goes back to Imperial's founding in London, Ont., in 1880. They are based upon the belief that, while a company's prime role is economic, its social effects and responsibilities can't be separated from the business side. All of this is now being reexamined and articulated by Dick LeSueur, manager of the company's newly formed corporate contributions division.

"All our contributions are aimed at improving the quality of life in this country," LeSueur says. "Our employees and the corporation itself can thrive only in a healthy society, so it's to our advantage to help maintain that kind of society."

It's also in the industry's own interest. Grants to engineering schools or other

THE CONTRIBUTION

Imperial funds some worthy causes. How does it decide when to give and how much?

by Robert Collins



Henry Koro

Karen Kain and Frank Augustyn dance in Imperial-supported version of The Nutcracker

The work of artists and writers is at times aided by the company



Barry Dursley

technical institutions help to encourage and train persons who may choose careers in the energy field. Even assistance to the arts, while it may seem totally altruistic, has aspects that may benefit Imperial. Writers, artists, and film producers, once established, may wish to contribute to Imperial's programs of communication through publications such as *Imperial Oil Review* or films the company produces.

The dental-therapy program in the North mentioned earlier fits the "quality-of-life" theme. So does the National Ballet production. "The day of the individual patron of the arts is over," commented Norbert Vesak, National Ballet choreographer, at the time of the donation. "In the past, rich families considered it an obligation to support the arts. Today, if the arts are to survive, corporations are what will help them stay alive."

Someday, as a result of Imperial's funding of systems research as it relates to medicine, a doctor anywhere in Canada may be able to push a button and get a computer report instantly on his patient's health history, covering all previous treatments anywhere in the country. That's one of the possibilities now being explored by Dr. J. H. Milsum, who holds the chair of general systems sponsored by Imperial at the University of British Columbia. Computer technology can play a major role in joining the efforts of the many professions involved in health procedures. It can thus increase the effectiveness and efficiency of our future health care. By the end of Imperial's five-year sponsorship, the company hopes the need and potential advancement will become sufficient to attract government or other private support for the project.

"It's what we call 'seed money'," explains LeSueur. "What we'd like to be is a leader in the community, launching innovative projects that may have been neglected in the past. Then, if they prove themselves worthwhile, we encourage them to become self-sufficient or get broader support from other quarters."

The decisions for such donations are

Some of the sculptures in the Imperial Oil art collection on display in the library of company headquarters, Toronto



not made lightly. A project must demonstrate a social need, a long-term benefit, and a wide application to the people of Canada. It must show clear-cut objectives, financial need, measurable results, and good management. Beyond that, anything goes.

Imperial has pledged \$30,000 so far to the Canadian Foundation for Economic Education, which aims to improve the teaching of economics in Canadian schools and colleges. As a result, the foundation hopes individuals will learn to understand the complexities of economic issues and be able to manage their own financial affairs better.

Over five years, Imperial will give a total of \$500,000 to the Institute for Research on Public Policy, sometimes dubbed Canada's first "think tank". It will look at long-range trends and needs in Canada and the world, trying to give the Canadian public and its politicians better information on which to base decisions on matters of policy.

Another \$65,000 went to the Canadian Studies Foundation, which is trying to improve the quality of Canadian studies in elementary and secondary schools. Education in Canada tends to be parochial in its content. History students in Quebec and Saskatchewan, for example, might get entirely different interpretations of the Plains of Abraham or the Riel Rebellion. The foundation is promoting a greater national understanding of past and present views, attitudes, and values held by groups separated by region, language, race, culture, and economic backgrounds.

Education has always been one of Imperial's concerns. For children of employees with the necessary academic standing, there are annual awards that pay tuition and compulsory fees for higher education. For graduates of Canadian universities, there are six annual graduate research fellowships worth \$4,000 per year for three years to each student. One recipient used his grant to study the prehistoric people of Manitoba. Another continued his research on classical drama. A third, who writes and speaks Mandarin Chinese, is delving into the "merging of Indian and Chinese philosophical and religious concepts in the Buddhist philosophy of the T'ang dynasty". A 23-year-old piano prodigy from Windsor, Ont., is researching French music from 1660 to 1760. A Montreal girl devotes her grant to

studying post-Biblical Jewish history and literature. One-half of the fellowships are awarded to students in the physical sciences, studying subjects such as molecular biology, microwave acoustics, or astrophysics. The recipients are selected by an outside committee of academics on the basis of excellence in their previous work.

What do all of these have to do with the oil industry? Nothing and everything. There's no direct link, but they all will have an effect on the quality of Canadian life.

One of the ways in which that quality may be enhanced is through the scholarship of men and women highly educated and able to bring a highly trained intellect to our national needs in order to ensure Canada is a leader in progressive thought and research. Two-thirds of Imperial's graduate research fellows during the last 15 years have gone into academic work, and 70 percent of those are now deans of faculties.

Canada's campuses benefit in yet another way from Imperial donations. University research grants to faculty members range from \$2,000 to \$5,000 each, in numbers of 40 or 50 per year. With such a grant, scientists at the University of Guelph have studied oil's effect on lobsters. The Nova Scotia Technical College used its money to help finance the study of oil's behavior in cold water, to help perfect techniques for oil-spill cleanups. At York University, a study is examining the way husbands and wives attempt to manage their own tensions and anxieties and those of their spouses.

Every year, LeSueur, his associate Hellen Lewis, and their staff of two receive about 500 requests for donations. All are reviewed. Sometimes additional information is acquired on specific requests. Then, recommendations by LeSueur and his staff are considered by the contributions committee of Imperial. It consists of five members of the board of directors and three advisors. Each year, they approve about 300 requests. (In addition to those examined by the contributions committee, each of Imperial's six regions oversees numerous requests of less than \$1,000.) But not all of the company's "other side" can be measured in dollars and cents. During the last quarter-century, it has made a contribution to Canadian art and its appreciation. Years ago, the *Imperial Oil*

Review served as a showcase for such budding artists as Harold Town, Michael Snow, and Dennis Burton. In 1952, the company purchased the historical drawings of famed Canadian artist C. W. Jefferys; in 1972, it donated the collection to the Public Archives of Canada.


Since 1965, Imperial has purchased 115 paintings and 13 sculptures, comprising one of Canada's most important corporate art collections. Portions of this collection travel on exhibit all over Canada, particularly among communities that have little opportunity to view Canadian art. This also permits promising young artists to be exhibited in the company of such mature artists as Goodridge Roberts, Louis de Niverville, Jacques de Tonnancour, Ronald Bloor, and R. York Wilson.

Similarly, Imperial has promoted Canadian filmmaking since 1948. For example, Christopher Chapman's first professional movie, *The Seasons*, was backed by the company. Earlier this year, at a special showing of a dozen Imperial films at the Ontario Science Centre, Gerald Pratley, leading Canadian critic and director of the Ontario Film Institute, paid a high tribute:

"No other industrial films have been considered important enough to run in a series at the institute," he said. "I remember when Imperial Oil and the National Film Board were the only groups using the talents of Canadian filmmakers."


All of this corporate effort – at first glance, so incompatible with the practical world of petroleum and chemicals – has had a cumulative effect, and not only among filmmakers, artists, students, and professional educators. Other thoughtful Canadians have come to realize that a company *can* be a responsible citizen while also being an efficient and profitable business, and that a good earnings record does not necessarily make the company's philanthropy suspect.

As Robert Fulford wrote about the \$100,000 grant in the first issue of the renewed *Saturday Night*: "We knew that Imperial had a long, excellent record of support for cultural institutions. We were pleased and grateful to be a part of that record and we were never concerned that our gratitude might influence material we would publish in the future on the resources industry." □



What next for religion?

Canada's religious
bodies face the
future with less
prestige. But perhaps
more validity



by A.C. Forrest

A revolution has taken place in the thinking of religious people during the past 50 years. Its impact on Canadian life should be profound. Although it's reflected in part by such things as new fashions in worship, striking ecclesiastical art, and priests getting married,

such dramatic innovations and events by no means adequately mirror the revolution. For the radical change is in the attitude of religious persons to other religious persons and their ideas.

The change is better expressed in the common use of such words as dialogue,

openness, ecumenical, and liberation, and the denunciation of practices such as manipulation, coercion, exploitation, and authoritarianism.

If Jesus returned, he would probably be angered by the failures of his disciples. So would Mohammed and the



*If you round the corner, there is nothing there.
Religion, like time, has no return to the good
old days, so we go on to new days*

prophets of Israel. But I hope there aren't as many grounds for anger as were obvious 50 years ago. For then, some Protestants filled their Sunday-night pews by delivering sermons denouncing Catholics; some Catholics taught that Protestants were going to hell and you married one in peril of your soul. Many Christians thought Muslims were infidels, Buddhists and Hindus heathen. And the Christian world was still picking on the Jews, and some who called themselves Christians were preparing for the holocaust.

A half-century ago, the clergy still used and manipulated the laity. Some devoutly religious husbands exploited their wives "whose place was in the home" and domineered their children who "were to be seen and not heard". There were numerous and flagrant examples of manipulation – denying information, suppressing books, twisting the facts. Religionists rushed around the world seeking converts to their sects by threatening hellfire to the unconverted and offering rice in exchange for baptism. Godly people sometimes treated others as fools.

Once, when I was a small boy, I called my sister a fool. She, two years my senior, able to read and the winner of a prize for regular Sunday-school attendance, informed me promptly that I was in danger of hellfire. It said so, right there in Matthew V and 22.

At that tender age, I had been well instructed in several basic theological facts. The Bible was infallible. There was a fiery place called hell to which

bad people were sent and punished forever after they died. I worried about it on and off for several years, and never again called anyone a fool.

It was many years before I came to understand what Jesus meant when he denounced such name-calling. To make a violent attack on another was one thing. It might have one hauled before the earthly magistrates. But to call a person a fool, to treat another human being as though he were a non-person or a lesser person was destructive and evil, bringing upon the guilty the judgment of God.

My slow journey into an understanding of that teaching of Jesus paralleled, I believe, our ecclesiastical journey into a new understanding of what constitutes decent human relations. During recent decades, thoughtful religious people have been seeking to humanize society. The humanizing movement is reflected in the numerous schemata of the Vatican Council and the findings of the World Council of Churches. Pope John gave it a great push forward.

But while John 23rd gave impetus to the movement, the movement gave the papacy to John. For in this humanizing process, I believe that ordinary devout people in the pews were nearly always ahead of the clergy. Long before Pope John's Christmas, 1959, announcement that "the mark of Christ" was to be found on the foreheads of non-Catholic Christians, Roman Catholics knew that their Protestant neighbors were followers of Christ. And my mother who may not have had much use for Rome knew that her Catholic neighbors were godly people.

The new decency in interchurch and interreligious relations has, however, not brought about a humanizing of our society. Violence in the streets, crimes against people, racial strife, exploitation of sex, and degradation of women may even suggest that society has become more dehumanized.

A psychiatrist in one of Canada's loveliest suburbs told a minister recently: "Keep up your counseling even when you feel inadequate. The aliena-

tion between husbands and wives, the hostility between parents and children, is so massive we psychiatrists just can't cope. We need every bit of help we can get."

The general hospital in that community has just converted most of its maternity wing to a psychiatric unit. Drug addiction and alcoholism have reached alarming rates. What does that say about my thesis that leaders of religion have been going through a revolution bringing about relationships that are more decent and humane?

It seems to say that the voice of religion has not been heard or, if heard, ignored. Men of faith looking at the record of religion in the world have begun to understand that the non-religious world is unimpressed by preachers and prelates who pray for peace, but fight among themselves.

It is not enough to announce that the religious wars are over; it is necessary to add that the religious wars were all wrong and try to correct the lingering wrongs. Now, the leaders of religious communities are seeking understanding among themselves. They are trying to correct the false thinking that so often led Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, and others to hate, rather than love, one another.

The Biblical injunction "Physician, heal thyself!" has been heard and is being acted upon. Results among the religious are obvious, but they have not yet changed the world. Perhaps, despite progress, the voice of religion is still too uncertain, or it may be the world won't listen anymore.

It has to be admitted that the churches of Canada (and religious institutions in much of the world) have less influence on society and culture than they had a half-century ago. During these 50 years, religious institutions did attain a level of popularity and financial strength perhaps never before achieved. The peak was reached in 1959, and since then there has been a steady decline.

The decline is most obvious in Quebec and among liberal Protestant churches. Those who remember the

good old days of packed pews, the boom in church building, and swelling membership rolls, keep searching annual statistics for signs that “we have rounded the corner”. A Montreal priest reminded me: “If you round the corner you will find there is nothing there. There is no return to the good old days. We go on to new days.”

As the religious organizations move into the future with lessened prestige, a shortage of clergy, and shrinking membership, they may have to admit that the belief in a personal God is weaker than it was 15 or 20 years ago. But it is possible – I believe probable – that while the faithful may be less pious, they are more committed. Those religious persons who have been caught up in the changed mood not only see themselves as their brother’s keeper but their brother’s brother. The great demand that God puts upon his followers is to love one another. And you can’t love another and treat him as an inferior.

In Canada’s religious communities, the new humanism is being expressed in changed attitudes toward the poor, the immigrants, the native people. It reflects itself in English-French relations and the women’s liberation movement. There are altered attitudes toward the priest who changes vocations, the girl who becomes an unmarried mother, the person whose marriage is broken, the people in common-law relationships, and members of the homosexual community. There is the deepening concern expressed in the formidable phrase “the theology of ecology”. It involves the preservation of the natural environment, the distribution of food to the world’s hungry, and the need to share land as well as wealth.

The interest in Oriental religions by young people, a curious phenomenon of our age, reflects some disillusionment with religions of the west or religious leaders. It also indicates a hungering for reality, which apparently some of the young have found in the mystical faiths of the East.

In Montreal, Father Raynald Brilant, secretary to the Conference of Catholic Bishops of Quebec, told me

that the two most significant emphases are the “return to prayer in the charismatic movement and involvement in social issues – especially the poverty issue”. In English Canada, current emphases are much the same. Christians and Jews are deeply involved together, both in prayer and social action.

Two Toronto rabbis, one of the Reformed and the other of the Orthodox tradition, support this thesis. “There is a greater willingness to listen,” says Rabbi Gunther Plaut, “and more appreciation of the validity of our differences. I think this may be even more true of Canada than the U.S. America was the great melting pot. We’ve never tried to be a melting pot.”

Rabbi Reuben Slonim adds, “There is an old Midrash [commentary] that imagines God saying, ‘Would that men would forget me and remember my law.’ The emphasis today is on human relationships. Modern man may be neglectful of formal religion, but he is putting more stress on ethics.”

Fifty years ago, the popular conviction among religious people in Canada was that, whatever we were born or converted to be, we were superior to



“In all these
new attitudes,
I believe
nothing equals the
significance of
women’s liberation.”



others. We English-speaking Protestants took it for granted that it would be a good thing if others could be converted to our ways. I find that Roman Catholics shared the same attitude toward us, if they bothered to give us a second thought.

During those years, we clergy were skilled proselytizers and manipulators. In Quebec, the parish priest had unrivaled power. He was usually the best-educated man in the parish; there was a religious mystique for him to enjoy and to use for selfish or godly ends. Youngsters got religion from the home, the priest at church, the nuns at school, and the brothers at high school. There was more at university, if they made it.

In English Canada, we had our own methods. I know an Ontario town where a leading employer put “Methodist preferred” in his advertisements for workmen. Fifty years ago, upward mobility meant transferring from the Salvation Army to the Baptist to the United to the Anglican churches.

When I was a young minister, an older man explained to me how to “handle the board” of my congregation in order to get my own way. I was to take two or three friends aside before a meeting, and get them on my side. This was just one of many ways we managed things in our democratic, conciliar churches. We envied the priest a little for his dictatorial powers.

I didn’t hesitate to persuade parents to join the church because it was good for their children, and didn’t see anything wrong with using the opportunities for social fellowship to recruit members for the church. In other words, some of us in organized religion treated our people as though they were less smart than we, to be used to accomplish what we believed to be right. In Quebec, the church used its authority to limit the reading of its people. It had the film *Martin Luther* banned. It deeply influenced much of the press, and even owned some of it.

We know now that man has a basic right to information. It is enshrined in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That means we recognize we have no right to suppress information, manage the news, water down the Gospel, manipulate the people, even for what we believe to be a good cause.

Fifty years ago, when the United Church was formed by a union chiefly of Methodist, Congregational, and Pres-

byterian Christians, members of the churches used to listen to sermons on foreign missions and sing:

Can we, whose souls are lighted

With wisdom from on high,

Can we to men benighted

The lamp of life deny?

That's not all the foreign-mission story; many of the missionaries were saintly persons given to lives of service accompanied by extreme sacrifice. However, the presuppositions of our superiority over the "heathen" are unacceptable today. Now Christian leaders will go halfway around the world to sit for days to listen to Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims speak of their faith.

Some of the same assumptions of superiority underlie the present and past attitude toward the native peoples of Canada. Not many years ago, I approved as a general attitude to Canadian Indians: "Let's educate them, integrate them, marry them, and assimilate them." What else could be better! But the native peoples don't want to be assimilated and disappear. They are people with the same rights we have – and in some cases perhaps some special rights to this land.

World War II did a lot to erode religious bigotry in Canada. How ridiculous it now seems that on military parade when the Roman-Catholic padre said prayers, the order was given, "Roman Catholics, stand fast. All others two paces to the rear, quick march". And vice versa. While that took place on the parade square, the chaplains and men flouted the foolish rules in mess, office, and station chapel. The finale came, I suppose, on that sinking American ship where three chaplains, a Protestant, a Catholic, and a Jew, handed over their life jackets to those who were without, linked arms, and went down together.

Father Barry Jones of Montreal explained the changed attitude of his communion by saying: "The church has shifted from a parental role to that of a blood-related friend." And in that extended family, I feel welcome; so may the Jew, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and all other human beings.

In all these new attitudes, I believe nothing equals the significance of women's liberation. That movement provides the biggest promise and biggest threat to mankind since the abolition of



"You can't be
fully human if
you benefit
from the slavery
and exploitation
of others."



slavery. The threat is obvious. On the surface, we men feel threatened by wives and sisters who ask us to share the cooking and diaper-changing chores, and then move into what were once considered male monopolies. It is worse if they do our jobs better than we did. But the deeper threat is that, if this inevitable movement to equality is resisted or misdirected, the consequences of continued injustice and suppression will be numerous, bitter, and prolonged. For let us make no mistake: the women have a cause, and it is right, and the determination of a few is becoming the conviction of the many.

As for the promise, it is a promise for men, too. To cite one small example, too many men forced into the competitive bread-winning, status-seeking, keep-your-wife-as-a-well-dressed-pet role are breaking down in mid-life. At least in western society, women's liberation holds a promise of taking the pressure off men and reducing the numbers of heart attacks, marriage breakdowns – and lonely rich widows.

It is being supported in some churches, resisted in others, but it will be felt in all. The humanist in this movement is one who recognizes the simple truth that men and women should be

accorded equal rights. That's the right to sharing the washing of dishes and the papacy, too.

Thirty-five years ago, The United Church of Canada, which now recognizes and has begun to provide equal rights, was still debating the ordination of women. Some Baptists were ahead. The Presbyterians came along later. Canadian Anglicans, in June, 1975, approved the ordination of women. Catholics are still debating it. I am not going to predict when full equality will come, but it will.

Those who still resist equality in the religious communities should remember that, just more than 100 years ago, the religious establishment was a great supporter of slavery in the southern United States. Baptist, Methodist, and Episcopalian clergy averaged 33 slaves per manse, parsonage, and rectory. That was one good reason the preachers searched the scripture for arguments to support slavery.

But you can't be fully human if you benefit from the slavery and exploitation of others. If, within the family of those who profess to believe in God, we learn to treat each other as fully human and extend that from family to the community and the world, we may see peaceful revolution – with more peace and revolution than the world has known. Unfortunately, the momentum is slight and the inertia great. But there is no doubt the finest expression of religious faith is, as wise men and women are saying, that all are created in the image of God, and all must have equal opportunity to grow in communion with one another and with the Creator. □

The Rev. A. C. Forrest completed his 20th year last June as editor of The United Church Observer.





GRAND MANAN

An island, an evening
sea, and memories
that come as the tide

by Kenneth Bagnell
photos by Doris Mowry

It is the sea that I remember most from Grand Manan. I would get up early and ride my bicycle through the lingering fog until I found the wharf. Then I would wait, listening to distant gulls, men's voices drifting upon the mist, doors opening and the day beginning. In time, the fog would lift, the sun would light the water, and the boats would head out from the island to become specks upon the vast stage of the sea.

It is now almost a quarter-century since I first went to Grand Manan, an island in New Brunswick that was to become a lasting part of my mind and my imagination. It is a slender strip of land, 26 miles long, set in the great, strong tides at the mouth of the Bay of Fundy, about a half-day by boat from the town of St. Andrews. I was a teenager, and I was to live on Grand Manan for two summers during those early years of the fifties.

I had come from a town beside the sea, but I did not really know the sea. Hardly any of my relatives or friends fished it or crossed it, and months could go by when I might not even see it. But on Grand Manan, I could not avoid it; it was spread before me, for there was really only one long street that ran the length of the entire island, always within sight of the sea. The villages grew along the road. Many of the houses,

*At Pettes Cove, Grand Manan,
a fishing weir at low tide*

including the one I lived in, were only yards from the edge of the water. They were among the most spotless houses I've ever known, white frame houses, or rose-trellised cottages in surroundings so clean, it was said that on Grand Manan people swept the streets each morning.

There was no crime, at least none I knew of. In fact, I knew of no jail, though I assumed there was one. I knew only one policeman there, an RCMP constable who drove up and down the island a few times each day. Other than that, he did not seem particularly busy fighting crime. I got to know him. We got to know two girls who, by sheer good fortune, had the use of a Packard, but that is a digression.

That first summer – it was 1952 – I made a lasting friendship with one of the fishermen. He lived in the village of North Head, in a large frame house set among heavy and shadowy trees. He



Almost enveloped by morning fog, a fisherman pushes off

(below) Morning mist on Castalia marsh; (right) cliffs at Southern Head, Grand Manan







Seagulls glide overhead at Seal Cove, where high tide nudges the piles beneath brightly painted buildings

and his wife, a nurse at the island's hospital, would occasionally invite me to Sunday dinner. I looked forward to visiting them, not just because of their hospitality, but because he could talk of the sea with a depth and knowledge I had never known.

Toward the end of summer, I learned that he was more than a fisherman.

Many years earlier, when he was a boy, a summer visitor sensed his artistic gifts, and encouraged and helped him to study painting in New York. He went there but, since he wanted to paint the sea, he returned to Grand Manan after a few years, convinced it was only there, and only as a fisherman, that he could really know the sea.

Before I left that summer, he gave me one of his paintings, the surf boiling along the rocks. It hangs in my home today. I remember how his friends hoped that someday he would be recognized as a seascape painter. But he died within a year or two.

Grand Manan is best known for its dulce, the deep-maroon plant growing



amid the beach rocks and harvested by whole families who later place it to dry on the warm seawall. It is then sold as food. When the tide retreats, the beach is strewn with tiny life : creeping crustaceans, sea anemones, and here and there a jellyfish ending its days in the blaze of the sun. Beyond the water's edge stand the herring weirs – fences of

stakes supporting nets that take the fish at the high tide.
Today, tourists may reach the island on the steamer Grand Manan, which leaves the mainland from Black's Harbor. They can drive their cars aboard. But in the years I lived there, the car was hoisted by winch and slung aboard in an exercise that took the

breath of owners who watched their cars rise from the deck and swing through the air.
I spent my last summer on Grand Manan in 1953. Years later, I went back with my wife and our first son. Most of the friends I had made were gone, and of those still there, many were busy and some recalled me only dimly. But the



Surrounded by flat expanses of water and land, smokehouses at Woodward's Cove break the horizon

On the lookout for fish, great blue herons stand in calm water on a still morning



sea was the same as it had been. In the evenings, we sat out front at our rented cottage, watching the restless surface rolling by on its way to the Atlantic. It is a pastime that is never dull, since the sea is never the same, changing with the wind and the light, moving through the deep wine of sunset to the blue-black that comes in the final moment before dark.

On the day before we were to leave, I took my son, then four years old, and we went to a part of Grand Manan you may not find unless you ask : Dark Harbor. It is a lake of seawater on the western face of the island. We went in early evening and stayed until the sun began to glow like a flicker of flame upon the water. We stood and watched.

I thought we were alone. But then I heard a voice behind us. "I was his age when I came here first." An old man, sitting on a boulder, back to commune with the sea. We stayed until dark, the three of us, gazing on the expanse of water, listening to its murmurings, as new as the evening and as old as Genesis. □



Grand Manan harbor, with its stacked lobster traps and early morning mist

The setting sun flickers over a lake of seawater and a deserted beach at Dark Harbor

Kenneth Bagnell





Arbitrary measures must be applied, the author writes, to prevent the wastage and deterioration of the language

ON GUARD FOR ENGLISH

Language is changing.
But must change mean ruin?

by E.C. Phelan

You may think I'm a crank, a pedant, a fanatic, an archconservative, and a pain in the tongue. And you may be right. But by the time (about 15 minutes) you've come to the end of this article, I hope you will better understand my crusade to protect my mother tongue – English – from the barbarians, the slipshod, no-rules, empty-minded chatterers of the airwaves and scribblers of the press.

Until a couple of generations ago, the interaction of American and British usage of English in Canada was slow and gradual, dependent upon immigration and travel, and some exchange of books and newspapers. Our language was static, based firmly on a population originating in the British Isles, swayed by movements across the border from the south, with few idioms of truly Canadian origin. American magazines and British books were beginning to make an impression on English usage in Canada about the time of World War I (The Great War as it was known until 1939).

Radio and then television brought the walloping impact and immediacy of the spoken word – as it was spoken elsewhere – to the homes and minds of Canadians. Strange and alien forms of speech caused our language to stir and swell, to grow and flex, to change and revive. By its very function, language is

a vehicle of change and development, accepting new words to identify new things in the environment and technology, new idioms and new forms to suit the complexities of science and society. During the past half-century, the speed at which our language evolves has increased. Not all the changes have been for the better. Let's look at some of them.

The spoken language tends to run ahead of the written. That's obvious. The human tongue, under loose control from the brain, is inclined to distort and shorten in its rush to communicate the messages the brain releases. The pen, on the other hand, controlled at a more sedate pace by the same brain, gives more consideration to grammar and idiom, and to nuances of taste and style. But inevitably, the written word will accept or become infected with the gaucheries, clichés, and neologisms of speech.

The infection often begins when, failing to find the right word, we make verbs out of nouns: *victimize*, *enthuse*, *implement*. That's how unhappy words like "hospitalize" and its bastard offspring "hospitalization" are born. And how can we withstand the clichés from the sports world: *coming from behind a deficit*, *snapping a two-game losing streak*? Or from the police blotter: *there were no injuries*, *no incidents were reported*? "In-

juries" is not a substantive noun. Can't we simply say: *no one was hurt*? To suggest that there were no incidents during an event like a rock festival is preposterous. Violence, or misbehavior, or accidents, or incidents of violence is what is usually meant. Or from business and industry: *let's have some input*; *make certain of the throughput*; *we must impact on the economy*; *this on-going project*; *we expect the aircraft to be certificated*. These violations of grammar or syntax, repeated ad nauseam and multiplied thousands and millions of times by the media, are watering down our English.

Convince is a verb that requires a clause, not merely an infinitive, to complete it. "He convinced me to go home" is not English. We must say, "He convinced me that I should go home" or, more simply, "He persuaded me to go home". "Persuade" and "convince", which mean almost precisely the same thing, require quite different treatment in good English. But you'll hear radio and television reports a dozen times a day in which people are "convincing" others to do something.

Facility has two primary meanings – ease of performance and mental or physical dexterity. But these have been extended to mean something that makes any action easier. From there, this useful word has been launched into the realm of absurdity in which it has been

made to mean any area in which any activity goes on: a military facility, a chemical facility, a vacation facility. In Etobicoke, a Toronto suburb, a roadside sign now identifies an “environmental waste management facility” – in short, and in vastly better English, a dump. Good writers and careful speakers abhor such bastardization of a good word. Perhaps, like “definitely”, “facility” will fall into disuse or revert to its original meaning.

Some of the commonest and most persistent errors have been the target of stylists for years without much apparent deterrent result. The use of *hopefully* as an unattached adverb is windy jargon, but it is still the common talk of supposedly literate people in public life. We hear it spewed forth from press conferences by prime ministers and presidents. The so-called “live interviews” are debasing our speech perhaps as much as any other single thing. *Providing* is being used as a conjunction in place of the proper and obvious *provided*; *host* and *chair* and, heaven help us, *début* are being tossed about as verbs, as if gossip-column journalism had a license; *data* is employed as a singular form – *datum* (the same is true of *strata* and *stratum* and of *media* and *medium*); *enormity* is accepted as meaning of great size though its true meaning has to do with evil and wickedness.

Changes in language are inevitable and, indeed, welcome. The pedants used to rail against the use of *who* when grammar called for *whom*. Persistent misuse for many generations has finally prevailed and has made the ungrammatical *who* preferable in certain constructions. When you open a sentence, as in a question or command, *who* is now acceptable: who are you talking about? The intrusive use of the vanishing *whom*, oddly enough, is now the more common and more offensive mistake. The man who writes, “Johnson named Dempsey, whom he said was the better boxer” is a fraud.

The strict constructionists, according to Roy H. Copperud in his *American Usage: The Consensus* (1970), are outnumbered by the libertarians in the usage of *who* and *whom*. Among the minority, he lists Theodore M. Bernstein, who guided the style of *The New*

York Times with meticulous care for many years. But I find that Bernstein, in *Miss Thistlebottom's Hobgoblins* (1971), has joined the libertarians and writes: “As to *who*, the day is surely coming when it will completely displace *whom* standing at the head of a sentence or clause, whether the sentence is interrogative (Who did you write to?) or declarative (Who the Republicans will nominate is in doubt; I have no idea who the Republicans will nominate).” A five-column headline in *The Globe and Mail* recently (“Who will the Italians vote for?”) outraged only one reader sufficiently to cause him to write in

about it.

Some forms that seem abhorrent do become standard and some words actually change in meaning: *olympiad* used to mean the four years between the olympic games; now it has come to mean the period when the games occur or, indeed, the games themselves. *Prestigious* once had to do with illusion or imposture, but now is taken to mean illustrious.* *Decimate* comes from a Roman military exercise, to eliminate every 10th man, but now has a wider and less precise meaning – to destroy a large proportion of something.

Contact as a verb has had a long his-

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tory of opposition from grammarians, but has won general acceptance. Indeed, diverse new methods of communication have almost compelled its use; without it we would have had to invent a new word altogether.

Some truly Canadian idioms should have been kept. We have discarded the good Canadian *Grit*, reformer or Liberal, while retaining the ugly British *Tory* for Conservative. *Armories* as the singular noun for a central military building in larger Canadian cities is being abandoned for the more American-sounding *armory* – or *armoury* as our department of national defence lamely puts it. We used to call our least-valuable coin a *copper*. The Americans preferred to retain the British *penny*. Now we hear more of pennies or cents than of coppers – and something Canadian has been lost. And how about a *decker* for a catcher's mitt? I haven't been able to find it in any dictionary, but I'll bet you'll hear it in Ontario schoolyards and on playgrounds just as you did 50 years ago. A *double house* is unheard of in real estate offices; it must be semidetached.

Some other Canadianisms we still have that are worth protecting: mickey (for half size), mukluk, hydro (for electric service in general), backhouse (not outhouse), hardrock, bush pilot.

An Americanism repugnant to many Canadian readers and listeners is the incorrect linkage between verb and object in such common references as *consult with*. "Consult" is a transitive verb and should take a direct object. Mr. Trudeau may consult his cabinet colleagues, but he doesn't consult with them; he may have a consultation with them or he may confer with them. Nor does he *talk with* his ministers; he *talks to*

them. I have a theory that some of the difficulty with prepositions develops when a considerable proportion of a population is struggling with English as a second language; many of these people have no similar forms in their first language and find English idiom, much of which is based upon prepositions, difficult. A peculiarly American horror is the use of *wait on* for *wait for*. A servant waits on a table, but he should never wait on his employer to get home. In the same category is *drive by* for *drive past*. And perhaps the most ridiculous of all misused prepositions: *in back of* for behind. Stamp this out. It's Georgia-cracker talk.

The single, most frequent error in contemporary English is probably the use of *like* as a conjunction. Perhaps the rot set in with the celebrated commercial that insisted and insisted and insisted the sponsor's cigarette "tastes good like a cigarette should". I can now find this error in almost any edition of any newspaper I see – often a dozen times – and in most newscasts of three minutes or more. It seems impossible to convince most writers and broadcasters (and their lack of standards sets the tone for sloppy general usage) that "like" may not be used to introduce a clause with a verb in it. "Like" may be a noun (I have my own likes and dislikes) or a verb (I like to have my own way) or a preposition (like any reasonable person I have my prejudices), but it has no place as a conjunction (I make mistakes, too, like I keep admitting – wrong, wrong).

I have one more worrisome note about "like". Some uncertain writers are so unable to distinguish between a preposition and a conjunction that they erroneously eliminate "like" from their vocabulary for either. Instead, they offer us such nauseating pap as: the cardholder sends the draft to Ottawa where, in turn, it is deposited *as* any other cheque. A pox on them.

English is a complex language. The experts can't always tell us why some forms of expression are right while others, which appear to follow the same rules of grammar, are wrong. Funk and Wagnalls' dictionary defines *idiom* as "an expression peculiar to a language, not readily understandable from its

grammatical construction or from the meaning of its component parts". That's the way it is. And arbitrary measures must be applied to prevent the wastage and deterioration of the language.

There was no real authority on style and usage beyond the dictionaries and grammar textbooks until Fowler's *Modern English Usage* appeared with its great wisdom and sly humor in 1926. It stood almost unchallenged for 30 years as our guide to good usage. During the last 20 years, a plethora of works has appeared, many in America, all showing the wealth of interest and curiosity that has been generated by the rapidly changing modes of speech and writing. There is much truth in all of them, but neither a revealed truth nor a complete truth. There is no expert or committee of experts with impeccable taste capable of making absolute judgments. None at all.

In such a simple matter as the use of *as if* or *as though*, for instance, an indefatigable researcher like Professor Copperud has determined that (a) Bernstein and Fowler say they are interchangeable; (b) Evans and Fowler agree they must be followed by the conditional form of the verb in a statement contrary to fact; and (c) that Flesch flatly disagrees with (b). In his *American Usage: The Consensus*, Copperud balances the opinions of experts like Theodore M. Bernstein; Rudolph Flesch, whose *ABC of Style* was gospel in the journalism schools a few years ago; Wilson Follett (*Modern American Usage*); Margaret M. Bryant (*Current American Usage*); W. H. Fowler and Sir Ernest Gowers, who triumphantly revised Fowler's great work 10 years ago. Copperud's attempts at "consensus" settle very few arguments.

I have sometimes argued that editors in this age of frequent direct quotation should clean up the minor errors of grammar and syntax in the English of those they are quoting. But many hesitate to do so. Direct or taped broadcasts, after all, retain the flavor and the nuances, but display also the warts, and so flood us with clichés and imprecisions, spreading chaos and ruin through the language.

Police-blotter idiom threatens us. Fight it! □

*The legitimization of *prestige* in this sense has an amusing history. "Prestige" originally meant, in English, imposture or magic, acquiring that meaning through the French from the Latin verb *praestinguo*, to obscure (*prae*: before; *stinguo*: quench). The more recent meaning, importance based upon past achievement, reflects the illusory transfer of deeds to character. As recently as its 1959 edition, *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary* allowed only the single meaning for prestigious: pertaining to sleight-of-hand; deception. But *Funk and Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary* (1963) permits only the other meaning: having a famous reputation; illustrious. Sir Ernest Gowers, the British philologist, says "prestige" is one of the few words that has changed in meaning for the better rather than for the worse.

a writer, a script, and a saga

Adventures of a daring young man and a new film for Imperial

by David Parry

The first reaction was a dizzying sense of power. It's not that I'm partial to power, you understand; like most writers, my demands of life are simple. Toss me any old assignment involving, say, the lore of dancing in the South Pacific, and I'll be on my way faster than you can say, "Use the publisher's Chargex". But this job would be a little different. Imperial Oil wanted me to write the script for an animated film it was producing. I was about to turn into Superscribe, and I wouldn't need a phone booth to change my shirt.

How can animation heap upon a hitherto humble writer such delusions of omnipotence?

Consider a scene from a typical adventure movie in which the leading man is about to go to the guillotine. There are two ways to film this kind of action. One is through cinematic

contrivance, which makes it look as if the chap is losing his head. Of course, he really isn't, and sophisticated viewers can see through the sham. The other way is to do it for real. The trouble is, once the poor wretch finds out what's going on, he may let out disconsolate rumblings not in the script, which could spoil the sensitivity of the scene.

If timid actors don't hamper the writer's creative license in a regular film, a miserly producer will. Try to liven a science-fiction epic by having 5,000 Venusian commandos scoop Man and His World into some cosmic air bus, and a producer will know only one way to respond. That is to wring hands nervously and wail to the writer, "Dave, baby!"

None of this happens in animated film. If, for example, I want to have Noah beach his ark 12 miles up the

Fraser River, I just write it into the script. This sets off an efficient chain of activity. A designer draws the key scenes: ark nears shore, animals leave ark, Noah argues with Canada customs, and so on. The producer looks at the drawings and asks for changes (such as a shorter haircut for Noah so as not to upset conservative elements in the audience). When the drawings are approved, the sequence goes to an animator who brings the action to life through dozens of individual drawings for each movement that's involved. The animator usually draws simple pencil outlines. These are photographed onto movie film in a process called the pencil test. If the movements and timings are acceptable, the sequence goes to a team of inkers and painters who add color and background detail.

It's basically a simple procedure. As I



The film is an animated history of energy. Shown is Abraham Gesner, the Nova Scotian credited with the invention of kerosene

quickly learned though, there is more to animated film than meets the eye.

First, there was the script. My job was clearly defined: I would tell the story of energy fuels, past, present, and future. "Show how energy contributed to the growth of Canada," said Gordon Hinch, the film producer in Imperial's public affairs department. "Show how various energy fuels have stayed popular for a while, then been replaced by more efficient kinds of energy. Show how a careful program of continued exploration and development should keep Canada well supplied with energy for years to come. Show it all in a half-hour script."

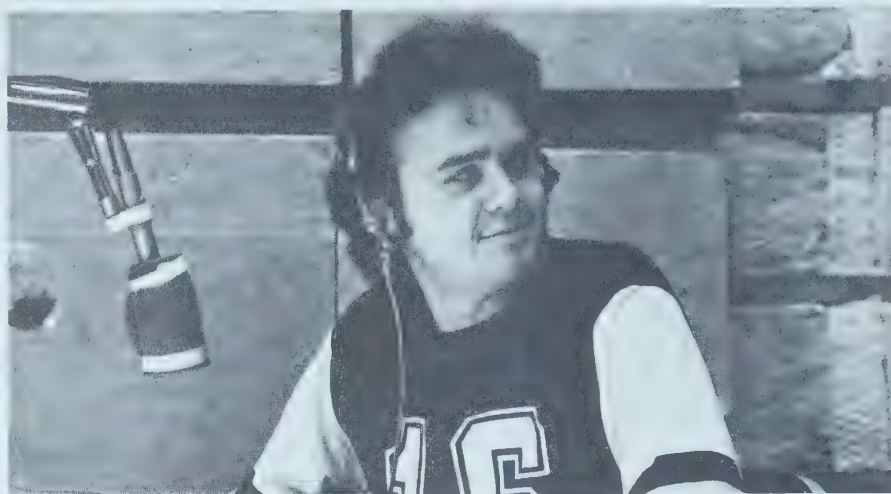
A half-hour script? Not long ago, I watched a television show in which Archie Bunker was sulking because he'd bought his wife a gift and no one in the family liked it. In the same number

of moments it took for Archie to bring himself around to a happy conclusion, I would have to tell the story of energy from Neanderthal man to nuclear fission. "We'd like it to fit into a half-hour TV slot or an average classroom period," Hinch explained.

Hinch had other hopes, too. One was to avoid what he called, "the Saturday-morning stuff" — cartoons with characters that walk by moving only the lower part of their legs, as overhead spaceships simulate flight by remaining static against a revolving galaxy of quickly drawn planets. "I'm looking for an illustrative feeling," Hinch revealed, "something that evokes a mood of warmth and nostalgia."

To find the team that could produce this feeling, Hinch interviewed six animation studios while I worked on the script. We had agreed there would be

one main character who would magically pop in and out of history. This would help us tie together an otherwise unruly assortment of information. The personality of our animated hero was going to be critical. He would have to be knowledgeable, but not know-it-all. He'd need a sense of humor and a full measure of personal charm. Above all, his carefully animated lips must always speak the truth. Hinch had seen to this by writing an accuracy clause into my contract. It made me personally liable for expenses incurred because of inaccuracies in the script. The thought of signing cheques from my personal account to designers, animators, inkers, painters, and camera crew was sufficient to guarantee Imperial a well-researched script. Or, more accurately, five well-researched scripts. That was how many drafts it took to follow the



photos: Cathy Findlay

Left, film-producer Gordon Hinch; centre, illustrator Dino Kotopoulos; right, writer David Parry; above, narrator Keith Hampshire

development of energy from cavemen's biceps through animal power, wind power, firewood, steam, kerosene, plus the marvels of the 20th century and beyond.

Wherever possible, I emphasized Canadian contributions to energy development. This often meant wading through scant or conflicting research. Was the world's first service station the Gulf outlet that opened in Pittsburgh in 1913 as one source claims? Or was it an Imperial station in Vancouver in 1908? Did the *Royal William*, the Quebec-built ship that was first to travel from North America to Europe entirely on steam, carry a red ensign or a blue one? Was the famous last-spike photograph taken on the "dull, murky November morning" Pierre Berton describes in *The Last Spike*? Or was the sun shining brightly as in the film version of *The National Dream*?

I developed an interest in Dr. Abraham Gesner, the Nova Scotian credited with the invention of kerosene in the 1850s. While working on the film,

I took a holiday through the Maritimes. Shortly after crossing into Nova Scotia, I pulled into a government tourist information centre. "I'm interested in anything you may have on Dr. Abraham Gesner," I told the lady behind the counter.

"Hmm. Dr. Gesner," said the lady, with a smile that told me she was trying her best to be helpful. "Do you know where he has his practice?"

Clearly, there is something about Canadian history that keeps many of us from taking it to heart. The achievements are there in great numbers, but the interest isn't. Perhaps one problem is the way it has been presented previously. In addition to the wealth of information I'd been asked to include, we'd need moments of good human interest. One solution I found was manure.

"Manure?" Gordon Hinch screwed up his nose.

"The pollution of the 1800s," I explained with that smugness known only to those who have done their home-

work. "With all of those horses and carts around, the good old days were not that great for anyone crossing the street. Did you know that in 1840, London, England had 2,000 street sweepers who did nothing but keep the intersections clear for pedestrians?"

Hinch confessed that this snippet of intelligence had somehow previously escaped him. He wondered if the topic could be dealt with in good taste.

By now contracts had been signed with a small Toronto animation firm, Kotopoulos and Associates, run by illustrator Dino Kotopoulos, a man proud of his Greek lineage. One day, after a disagreement, he warned me that his fellow countrymen controlled the restaurants of the world. If I liked eating out, I wouldn't cross him.

"I'm partial to Chinese food," I countered.

"Greeks own the Chinese restaurants, too," Kotopoulos said.

I did my best to get along with a minimum of personal conflicts. Apart from the restaurant thing, Kotopoulos

was a strong supporter of my street-sweeper scene. Its very survival would depend upon his willingness to treat it with sensitivity and good taste.

As everyone had expected, there were enormous advantages with animation. One scene dealing with man himself as an energy source had a complete shipload of galley slaves. It would have been enormously expensive to shoot with a real ship and crew.

But animation has its problems, too. For one thing, it's harder to spot mistakes.

"There is something wrong with that scene," I said, watching two old men playing checkers on the screen. The projector stopped. Heads turned, but I couldn't explain the error. The film was rewound and played again. On the third time through, we saw the problem. A black checker was making four jumps in a row, and one of the checkers it jumped was also black. We were so pleased at having caught the slip that it was weeks before anyone realized it is impossible for a single checker to make

four jumps forward, since there aren't enough squares on the board.

Occasionally, events in the outside world necessitated some rethinking. At one point, our animated host took us into the Arctic and told us that working there was a "tough, time-consuming ordeal in which drilling a single well can cost as much as \$4 million". That figure soon rose to \$5 million. Canadian singer and entertainer Keith Hampshire, who provided the voice of the host, was brought back into the studio where he attempted to match expression and tone of the surrounding words in changing a four to a five. He succeeded, but on screen the face (which had already been drawn) still mouths the word "four".

Original music for the film was written by Lothar Klein. It helped smooth the flow of activity and the wide assortment of scenes the story called for. With all elements working together, *The Great Canadian Energy Saga* offers an informative and occasionally funny look at the development

of energy – Canadian energy in particular.

Though the film covers man power, animal power, water power, petroleum power, and nuclear power, the sensation of writer power I'd looked for didn't happen. Yes, it was fun being able to summon heroes from the past. But these could scarcely be called my creations. My job was to interpret history, not to govern it, and the interpreter hails from a more humble strain than the ruler.

However, the objectives had been to tell a complex story in a short time, and to do it in a way that would set heads nodding in agreement, not in slumber. I believe we succeeded.

Illustrator Kotopoulos is happy with the film. As a result, neither producer Hinch nor I have been barred from the restaurants of the world. Kotopoulos still has the original artwork for one sequence that didn't make it into the movie. It's suitable for framing, and he'll let it go cheap. If there's room on your wall for a street-sweeping scene, you should call him.

Lothar Klein conducts the orchestra at a recording session of his original music for the film



The Saga story

The tale begins with man's most primitive source of energy : man himself. From neanderthal biceps, the film moves on to animal power and wind power, then shifts quickly into early Canada to look at the importance of plentiful energy supplies to this country's growth. The fire log, the whale-oil lamp, the gaslights of our early towns – they're all portrayed through animation in a nostalgic, amusing style.

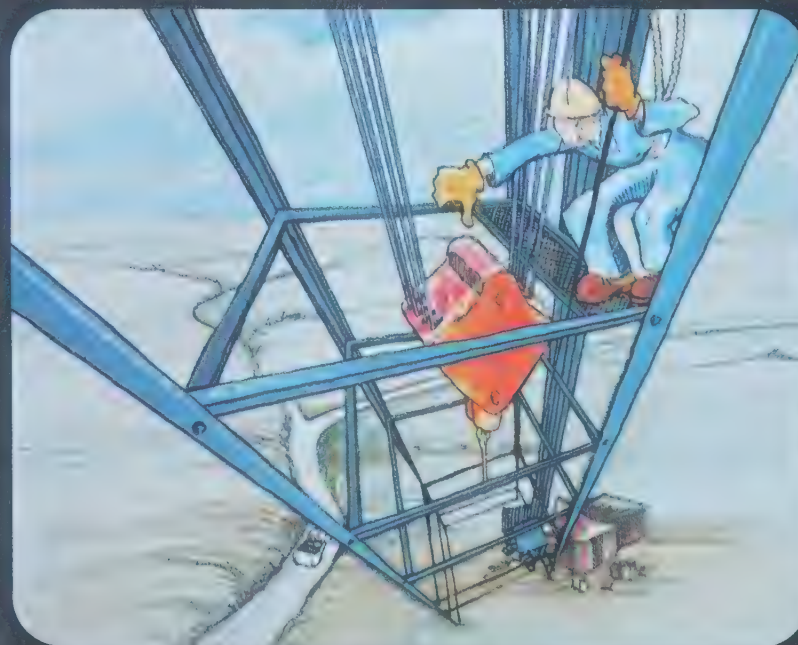
While *The Great Canadian Energy Saga* traces the major changes that have taken place in Canada's energy, it also notes definite patterns that have stayed unchanged since early inhabitants first put axe to tree. One such pattern is the cyclical nature of energy fuels, and man's tendency to depend upon one source of energy only "until something better comes along". The film suggests what might come along in the future.

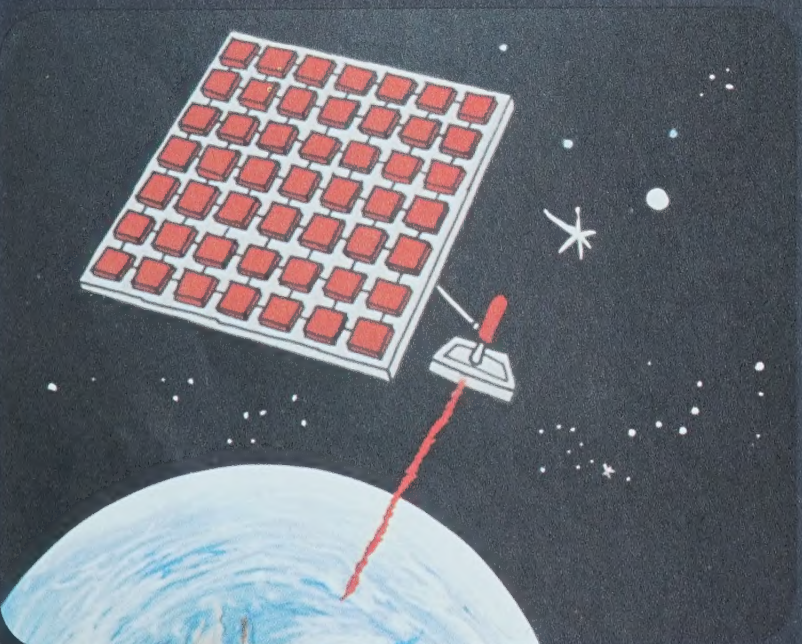
The Great Canadian Energy Saga may be one of the most ambitious animated films to be produced in Canada during recent years. Getting from script to screening took more than 14 months of design, artwork, and animation, in which a single walk across a room may require as many as 200 individual paintings. □

(top) Without energy-driven mills, Canadians couldn't grind wheat into tasty flour

(centre) A Quebec-built steamship was the first vessel to take the wind out of transatlantic travel

(bottom) Just after World War II, westerners spent much time hunting oil





(top) In 1948, the Calgary Stampeders won the Grey Cup. It was Alberta's second energetic milestone

(centre) As shown here, the cost of developing Arctic resources leaves some economists a bit cold

(bottom) In future, Canadians will receive energy straight out of the blue

in closing

One of the interesting things about the present day is the speed with which an issue can rise, claim our attention, convert our sympathy, and then die. Or else its very opposite can become the public fancy.

Take some of the issues that were the fashion of the middle sixties. One of the subjects very big with television producers and conveners of conferences was what some of them called the Age of Abundance. It was coming, that much we knew. Perhaps by 1990, almost certainly by 2000. By that time, there would be affluence for all and leisure for most, at least in North America. Moreover, by that time, we'd have shared much of it with the world, for we felt up to the task. Now, of course, the optimism has turned. The dreams of early retirement are revised because of inflation. As for global poverty, the new theme is that it may be too vast, too complicated for human

solution. There is, as some say, only so much room in the lifeboat.

I mention this because I wonder what will happen to the latest fashionable subject, which the heavy thinkers are calling Toward a New Ethic of Work. It is all around us; one of the most talked-about subjects. How to make work more satisfying or, to use the word of pop sociology, how to "humanize" it. Everybody seems convinced this is a valid issue because it had its birth in other valid issues. Two psychiatrists, in an essay called *Is there a new work ethic?*, recently wrote: "Consumer-oriented demands — focused in the sixties on the quality of life, the environment, community control, welfare rights, student participation, personal liberation, consumer boycotts, and alternative lifestyles — now seem to be focused on the work place, and are reflected in concern about health and working conditions in the factory and greater participation and autonomy on the job..."

The proof that this is more than just a fad is apparent elsewhere. There is a genuine claim that job dissatisfaction, if not epidemic, is certainly on the increase. People point to alleged sabotage by bored workers on assembly

lines; corporate executives changing careers because of strictures or pressures; women demanding more than menial positions; widespread alienation among the young with the traditional world of work. All of this suggests that unless ways are found to make work enjoyable, thus inspiring motivation, then there will be a growing unwillingness to bother with it.

Why has this happened? Partly because of changes that were inevitable as work became more concentrated in large organizations and large bureaucracies. It is natural in such situations that some people feel their importance and worth is lessened. Even managers have been bothered by it. The American Management Association reports that some members are hurt because decisions they once made are now made by computers.

But beyond changing work, there is a changed worker. The old-style employee, who remembered the depression and would hang on to any job for security, is gone. The new workers have higher expectations. They are obviously less committed to traditional levels of behavior, styles of dress, modes of

speech. Most of all, their attitude to work itself is different. They want a bigger say over their own work. They want some autonomy. The old hierarchical practices are gone or going.

This is the case even in organizations that many of us regard as highly conservative — those based upon military custom. Police Chief Harold Adamson of Toronto mentioned it in a conversation about changes in police work. "The day of Clancy the Cop is over," he said. "With the young man or woman entering police work today, dialogue is the thing. They have questions. They want to know why. So we spend a lot of time in discussion about why."

That's not just an enlightened view, but a practical one. It recognizes that people, no matter what their occupations, are not induced to work exclusively or, perhaps, primarily by the promise of more money or security. Their real expectations are not completely clear, for as work is being rethought, there is inevitable confusion over the things that motivate us and give us satisfaction. Perhaps they may be found in the human need for respect and esteem, in our ambitions for personal growth, rather than professional advancement.

In organizations where morale is high, those needs are usually sensed and efforts are made to meet them. People are given freedom to do their work

without supervision so strict it discourages their sense of confidence and erodes their creative desire. A healthy organization recognizes that it cannot maintain its collective health unless it maintains the individual's own healthy outlook by providing job satisfaction. Few competent management leaders, in government or industry, need to be convinced of that. The problem exists in those places of work where job dissatisfaction is ignored or taken for granted as a natural condition.

There's always a danger that, when we expect institutions to change, we lessen our expectations of those who work in them. Institutions and businesses ought to innovate and accommodate. I expect they will out of self-interest, if not altruism. But those who work have their own responsibilities. They should examine their attitudes as vigorously as they examine those of their companies. The most exciting job

in the world will not engage a mind that is dulled or a personality in which complaining is chronic. Sometimes workers' morale is low because the workers need more examination than the institutions.

Happy workers are not just better producers. They are probably an index to the degree of progressive business practice around them. It is not easy for large bureaucracies with a history of low worker satisfaction to renovate quickly their staff morale. But if they try, by enriching jobs, they will not only contribute to productivity, but probably to the national mental health.



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